

Koechner selected to play in Shrine Bowl



Louisburg High School senior Mason Koechner found out earlier this month that he was selected to play in the 2017 Kansas Shrine Bowl later this year. Koechner earned all-league and all-state honors on the defensive line this past season.

Once football season was complete, Mason Koechner watched as he began to get recognized by league coaches and media.

It started with first team all-league honors and first team all-state selections came shortly after. It was a barrage of awards that came following what was a successful season for the Louisburg High School senior.

Five months following his final snap on the high school football field, one more award came Koechner's way.

On April 3, Koechner was informed that he was selected to participate in the 2017 Kansas Shrine Bowl. Only 68 seniors from across the state are selected to participate in the charity all-star football game and Koechner was added to the list by different sports media in Kansas, along with the Kansas Shrine Bowl coaching staff.

"It is a great honor and I am proud to be able to represent Louisburg," Koechner said. "I was pretty excited when I heard and I am definitely looking forward to it."

The all-start contest will be held on July 29 at Butler County Community College in El Dorado and Koechner will play for the East squad under Rossville head coach Derick Hammes. The Shrine Bowl game, and events surrounding the contest, will benefit Shriners Hospitals for Children, which is a health care system of 22 hospitals dedicated to improving the lives of children.

The Kansas Shrine Bowl is a non-profit charity raising funds and awareness for the Shriners Hospitals for Children. The Shrine Bowl has been in existence since 1974, and since its inception, it has been promoting Kansas talent and the network of hospitals raising over \$2.5 million.

A week before the game, Koechner will practice with his East teammates and also spend time with Shriners Hospital patients. It was an experience that a former teammate, Anders Vance, took part in last season.

Vance represented Louisburg a year ago and Koechner heard several good things from him about his time at the event.

"Anders is a good friend of mine," Koechner said. "He's had nothing to say but good things. He made lots of friends that he regularly keeps in touch with so I am definitely looking forward to it and it seems like a great experience to be a part of."

Koechner had a big season for the Wildcats on both sides of the ball this past season. As defensive lineman, he finished with 67 tackles, including two sacks and two tackles for a loss.

On the offensive line, he helped block for an offense that totaled nearly 4,000 yards on the season.

"I am very excited for Mason and for the opportunity for him to play in the Shrine Bowl," Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein said. "I know Mason will represent himself, his

family, his school and this community very well in the game as well as the Shriners activities that they have planned for the week.

“I know the East coaching staff very well having coached with coach Hammes during my time at Rural. Coach Hammes is going to love Mason and the aggressiveness he plays with as well as his contagious positive attitude.”

Following his wrestling season in early March, Koechner had to have knee surgery, but he will be ready to go in time for the game in July and also for workouts with his new team – Garden City Community College – in June.

“I am doing as much as I can to recover as quickly as possible,” Koechner said. “They told me I should be fully recovered on June 1 and then I will report to Garden City for three weeks of summer workouts.”