

# Twice As Nice: Wildcats win second regional title



Louisburg senior Madisen Simpson (13) gets mobbed by teammates (from left) Bria Jensen, Morgan Messser, Mackenzie Scholtz, Skylar Bowman, Bailey Belcher and the rest of her Wildcat teammates following their 9-0 win over Bonner Springs Wednesday in the Class 4-1A regional championship game in Louisburg.

As 40-plus mph winds gusted over the Wildcat Sports Complex, the Louisburg High School girls soccer team blew right past Bonner Springs in its most important game of the season.

Louisburg took all the suspense out of the Class 4-1A regional championship game as it scored a pair of early goals and rolled to a 9-0 victory over the Braves. The win gives the Wildcats their second regional title in as many seasons – not too bad since the program has only been around for two years.

“Last year was amazing to win it in our first year,” Louisburg junior Bailey Belcher said. “This year, we just wanted to capitalize on it to show that we are still here and not going to let it go.”

The Wildcats (12-5-1) proved they weren’t going anywhere as they scored two goals in the first two minutes and picked apart the Bonner Springs defense to a tune five first half goals. They now find themselves one victory away from reaching

its first state semifinal.

Louisburg has had quite the two-year run as it has now totaled two regional championships and 26 victories in the first two years of its existence.

“It feels good,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “Winning a regional title is always a goal, or at the very least to play for one, and I think that puts our program in a good spot. When the kids get a taste of it, they just get fired up and we are a different team. We played 10 times better this time than our last game and the girls get into it.

“It is fun and doesn’t happen very often, especially for a second-year program. Now to win 26 games and counting in our first two seasons is incredible. Some teams don’t win that in six or seven seasons.”



**Louisburg’s Savannah Reinhart (left) battles a Bonner**

**Springs player for position Wednesday in Louisburg.  
Reinhart had three assists in the win.**

Bonner Springs had a difficult time slowing down the Wildcat attack – more specifically Mackenzie Scholtz. The freshman forward had her best day of the season as she tallied a game-high five goals and also had three assists.

Belcher added a pair of goals – both coming in the first half – and freshman Erin Lemke accounted for the other. The Wildcats also scored on an own goal to start the second half.

“It is really cool, just being a part of this as a freshman,” Scholtz said. “We have worked as a team all season, and we knew we could do this and we did. We just want to keep going and fight to the end.

“I feel like I had a lot of energy for the most part, but I had no idea that I could do that. It was a good feeling to be able to help the team like that.”

The Wildcats did a good job moving the ball around as they broke through the Bonner Springs defense with ease. Junior Savannah Reinhart was on the starting end on some of those goals as she tied Scholtz with a team-high three assists. Senior Madisen Simpson and sophomore Hallie Hutsell also had an assist in the win.

“We figured we would have good runs and be able to cut them down the middle with Bailey and Scholtzy,” Conley said. “I told them they were going to get tons of looks and that they just have to pick a corner and bury them. We just had breakaway after breakaway and that is a credit to their teammates. If it wasn’t for those outside midifelders, or Bailey playing it wide, (Mackenzie) might not have those wide open lanes. She just took full advantage of it.”

Within the first minute, Scholtz put the Wildcats on the board with a goal and then Belcher followed with another to give

Louisburg a quick 2-0 advantage.

Bonner Springs didn't back down at that point as the Braves moved the ball up the field and were awarded a penalty kick when senior defender Bryn O'Meara was called for a foul in the box.



**Goalie Shay Whiting dives to save a penalty kick early in Wednesday's regional championship game.**

Louisburg goalie Shay Whiting came to the rescue with a diving save to stop the penalty kick and kept the Braves off of the board. More importantly, it kept the momentum on the side of the Wildcats and they were able to use that to get an even bigger lead.

"That was huge," Conley said. "Shay made a great save there. You know, I thought that was a good stick by Bryn and not sure there was a foul there. Still, Shay came up big and did her job. That is the thing with Shay now, she is just ringing the bell and going to work. She has been really good the last couple of weeks."

It was Whiting's ninth shutout of the season as she got help

from the Wildcat defensive back line of O'Meara, Camdyn Clark, Kaitlyn Lewer and Hannah Straub as they limited Bonner Springs' shots on goal.

The scoring onslaught continued in the first half for Louisburg as Belcher scored to make it 3-0 a few minutes later. Scholtz then scored two more times to give Louisburg a 5-0 halftime lead and herself at hat trick.

Louisburg scored on an own goal to start the second half, followed by two more goals from Scholtz and another from Lemke to secure the championship.



**Defender Camdyn Clark (right) knocks the ball out of the back Wednesday.**

“Bonner Springs ran that high line quite a bit and ultimately we just shredded it,” Conley said. “We did a good job of finding feet, playing the through ball and off to the races we

went. It is something that was going to be key in this and that it was going to help us a lot.

“The way we play, we look to counter a lot. I think that helped when they got four high, then we could just push and go. Even with the wind, we had a ton of space to run and that was very beneficial to us. We just worked really hard. We started subbing about every eight minutes just trying to push them and try to wear Bonner Springs down a little bit. We looked a lot fresher than they were.”



**The Louisburg girls soccer team gathers under the scoreboard for a team picture following their regional championship win over Bonner Springs.**

Louisburg will try for a spot in its first state tournament Tuesday when it hosts Piper in the state quarterfinals. The match is set to begin at 5 p.m.

The Wildcats fell in the state quarterfinals last season and they are ready to take another step forward.

“Last year’s loss definitely gives us motivation,” Belcher said. “We have to capitalize on it. We need to push farther

than what we did last year and show everyone that we can do more.”