

Wildcats hope to make program history tonight



Louisburg senior Bryn O'Meara (left) and the rest of the Wildcats will host Piper at 5 p.m. today in the Northeast quarterfinal game. A win would put Louisburg in the state semifinals for the first time in its history.

The last time the Louisburg girls soccer team faced off with Piper was more than a month ago.

It wasn't much of a match as the Wildcats shutout the Pirates, 4-0, in a game that had to be settled over two days as it was postponed midway through due to the weather.

The Wildcats will welcome Piper back to Louisburg at 5 p.m., today when they host the Pirates in the Class 4-1A Northeast quarterfinals. Everyone on the Wildcat team is fully aware it won't be as easy this time around as they face the Kaw Valley League champion.

"When we played them the first time, they were missing a couple players and when they came back they were all here and was a much tighter game," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "Any given day, anything can happen. If we take an opponent lightly, then it will come back to get you and I think we saw that with a couple teams at the beginning of the year. Hopefully we are ready to exert a lot of energy."

One more win and Louisburg will find itself in the state semifinals for the first time in team history. Considering the Wildcats are just in their second year of existence, they are making bigger strides than many in the community thought possible and the players are ready to give back.

"I think it is really important because it shows our community that we have been putting in the effort," senior captain Bryn O'Meara said. "They raised a lot of money for us that we could become a program and now it is our turn to give back to them. We want them to come watch us so they can support us again. We want to win for us and for them."

The Wildcats (12-5-1) will have to contain a Piper team that currently has a 11-6 record and defeated Baldwin, 2-0, in its regional championship game.

"They have three really good kids in the middle," Conley said. "They will take it at you and they are physical. They have some kids that shoot from way outside and send a lofted chip ball in. For us, we have to stand them up and make them take contested shots. We just have to outwork them. They are a scrappy team and will keep working. We have to match that intensity and take it even further. They are the Kaw Valley champions and that is not an easy league to win. We will have our hands full."

On the other side, the Louisburg offensive attack has been playing well as it has scored 19 goals in its two regional games, including a 9-0 victory over Bonner Springs in the regional title game last week.

Freshman Mackenzie Scholtz and junior Bailey Belcher provide the Wildcats with a bulk of the scoring up front, but junior Savannah Reinhart, senior Quincy Rice and freshman Trinity Moore will also look to provide some scoring punch.

Defensively, the Wildcats have posted shutouts in three of their last four matches led by goalie Shay Whiting and

defensive back line of O'Meara, Camdyn Clark, Hannah Straub and Kaitlyn Lewer. Midfielders Avery O'Meara, Madisen Simpson and Erin Lemke will also look to provide some protection in the middle.

"It is really exciting because we are a second-year program and we are getting a chance to go to state for a second year in a row," Simpson said. "Like coach said, a lot of teams don't get this chance to go this far or even to make it to the regional championship.

"Making it to state in just our second year would just show a lot of teams that we aren't just small-town Louisburg, but we can succeed in anything that we put our minds to."