

Wildcats capture league title on Senior Night



Louisburg senior Grant Ryals pumps his fist in the air in front of the Wildcat crowd Thursday following his goal on Senior Night. The Wildcats defeated Ottawa 6-0 and Ryals was one of 10 seniors honored before the contest.

All 10 Louisburg soccer seniors took the pitch together for the first time this season as all 10 got the opportunity to start on Senior Night against Ottawa.

Once it was all over, all the Wildcats did was leave as league champions.

Louisburg defeated Ottawa 6-0 on Thursday at Wildcat Soccer Stadium, and the victory allowed the Wildcats to clinch the Frontier League title outright with a 10-2 league mark and they finished the season with an 11-5 overall record.

It was the first league title for Louisburg since 2010 and a perfect way to honor a big Wildcat senior class.

"It feels so good," senior Grant Ryals said. "After seven years of not winning a league title, then last year after throwing it away losing to Baldwin, it feels good not to share it. I will remember this game for years."

Ryals joined fellow seniors Raistlin Brewer, Kris Light, Ambrose Stefan, Scott Murphy, Kyle Allen, Christian Scholtz,

David Holiday, Jarod Rose and Dalton Ribordy as they were all recognized in front of their home fans prior to the contest.



Seniors (front row, from left) Christian Scholtz, Grant Ryals, Ambrose Stefan, Scott Murphy, Kyle Allen; (back) David Holiday, Jarod Rose, Dalton Ribordy, Kris Light and Raistlin Brewer were all honored prior to Thursday's Senior Night game.

Louisburg coach Kyle Conley couldn't have picked a better way to send his seniors out than with a league crown.

"It means a lot." Conley said. "The league title was one of the things that we let slip away last year. For the boys, we sat down and set goals at the beginning of the year and the first step is to win a league title. Knowing that no matter what happened, we were still going to get a share of it. I told the guys that we need to get it outright. This is what we want and this is what we have worked for. It is not good enough to enjoy the night and not play hard."

"The guys were fired up when I told them I was going to let the 'Senior 10' go. We call them the Dream Team and I wondered how the Dream Team would do. Dang if they didn't score in the first two minutes of the game. They played hard, they were focused and ready to roll. They had their heads on right and they did a really good job."



Christian Scholtz heads the ball in for a goal in the first half against Ottawa on Thursday.

Those seniors did get off to a quick start as the Wildcats scored two minutes into the contest on a goal from Brewer and he was one of four different seniors to score in the first half.

Next, it was Ryals' turn. Ryals took a corner kick, but just made a light pass to teammate Landon Johnson in front of him and Johnson tapped it right back to Ryals. His shot from about

20 yards out found the back of the net.

“For us seniors, knowing this was our last regular season game at home, and having a big crowd out to support us, we knew what we had to do,” Ryals said. “We had to come out quick. We knew how Ottawa was going to play and they just kick a lot of long balls. We started with our same back line and we were able to get a couple quick goals and finished the job.

“It is pretty special to score on Senior Night. I think I had like 20 members of my family here to watch it, so that is pretty awesome.”

A pair of seniors connected for the Wildcats’ third goal as Holiday dribbled into the box near the ball and crossed it over to Scholtz, who headed the ball in for a 3-0 lead. Then with six minutes left in the first half, Rose connected with a goal of his own and Louisburg took a 4-0 halftime advantage.

Ryals and Johnson both had two assists to help with all the scoring, while Holiday and Brewer also added an assist each.

Louisburg pushed its lead to 6-0 right after halftime and it took all of 30 seconds. Junior Brock Bila scored back-to-back goals to open the second half to all but seal the win and the Wildcats’ outright league title.

It was more than enough to bring a packed Wildcat Soccer Stadium to its feet.

“When you see the stands full, everyone up chanting and the student section going nuts, that is a fun environment to play in,” Conley said. “You want to play hard, you want to play better and not let your town down. Ultimately, everything we do represents our community and that is what we are after. I think the boys did a great job in that aspect.”

The Wildcats tried to have a little more fun as they tried to get Light, who normally plays on defense and Ribordy, a backup

goalie, a chance at scoring a goal. Both players had opportunities, but couldn't find the back of the net. Ribordy did score his first goal earlier in the day during the junior varsity's 7-0 win.



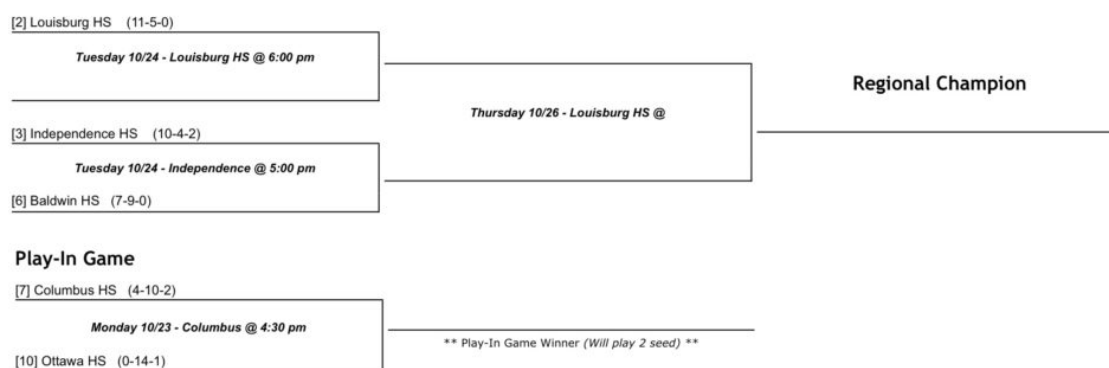
Senior Dalton Ribordy tries to settle a ball in the box Thursday against Ottawa.

"We wanted them to go out there and run a little bit," Conley said of Ribordy and Light. "Mr. Ribordy is a straight basketball player that we convinced to come out and play soccer to stay in shape. He busts his tail every day in the goalkeeping aspect, so we started dabbling with the idea of him playing up top in a JV game, just so he would know what to do when he went in. He came in ready to roll and just played hard. It is good to see Kristopher up there running around and he had two pretty good chances to put one away."

Louisburg's defense did its job as Stefan recorded his sixth shutout of the season, while the back line of Murphy, Light, Will Frank and Eli Minster didn't give Ottawa many chances on goal and help secured a league title.

"It was a team win for sure," Conley said. "They did a good job of playing as a team and as a family."

East Regional #2



Louisburg earns the No. 2 seed and will host the regional tournament this week.

The Wildcats will begin their quest for another regional championship Tuesday. Louisburg earned the No. 2 seed and will play the winner of the play-in game between Columbus and Ottawa at 6 p.m. on Tuesday in Louisburg.

If Louisburg advances, they will host the regional championship Thursday.