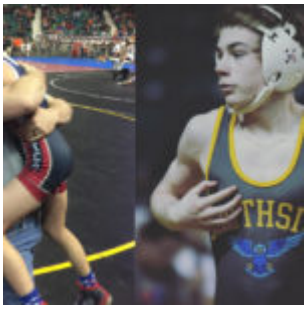
Allen, Owens win kids state wrestling titles



Two Louisburg wrestlers recently won kids state titles in Topeka. (Left) Kaden Allen jumps into the arms of his father Ken after winning the 12-and-under, 68-pound state crown, while Ryan Owens (right) captured the high school, 100-pound title on March 25.

A pair of Louisburg youth wrestlers ended their season as one of the best in the state.

Kaden Allen (12-and-under, 68 pounds) and Ryan Owens (high school, 100 pounds) each captured a state title on March 25 during the USAWKS State Folkstyle Championship in Topeka as they were a part of 16 Louisburg wrestlers who qualified for the state event.

Allen, who competes with the Rebel Wrestling Club, worked his way through a tough bracket that included an opponent he had lost to on a couple different occasions.

He opened with a pin over Derby's Nolan Tauer and then won by technical fall in the quarterfinals over Burlington's Isaiah Moss. Allen got a pin over Newton's Eddy Southern in the semifinals before squaring off with Andrew Honas of the Sunflower Kids Club.

Allen wrestled a difficult championship match but came away

with the title after winning a 2-0 decision to win his first state championship.

“Kaden did great,” Rebels coach Matt Blancarte said. “He beat a kid in the finals who he had lost to multiple times. He got his head right and took care of business. He wrestled a very smart match in the finals.”

As for Owens, who wrestles for Olathe Southside and is a freshman at Louisburg High School, he rattled off three consecutive wins for his championship in the high school division.

Owens opened with an 8-4 decision over Derby’s Cody Woods and then outlasted Kassidy Leiszler of the Con Kids Club for a 4-1 win. In his final match, Owens dominated Hoisington’s Nataliz Galza as he won by a 17-2 technical fall.

Owens just finished his high school season in which he was named the Junior Varsity Wrestler of the Year after he finished the season undefeated. He also saw some time on the varsity level too as he spent a majority of his time pushing senior Thad Hendrix, who was a Class 4A state qualifier.

“It will be a big boost for his confidence,” LHS wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird said of his kids title. “This year it was just kind of unfortunate where he was at being a freshman behind a senior. Then throw in the fact that Ryan has grown up with Thad and being a buddy of the family. They wrestled like four times and all but one of their matches they were within one point of each other. It was great how he pushed Thad and Ryan didn’t stop wrestling hard.”

A pair of other Louisburg wrestlers also made their way to the medal stand.

Nick Beidelschies, who wrestled in the 8-and-under, 43-pound division, took third place overall after he finished with a 5-1 record. Beidelschies, who wrestles for the Paola Wrestling

Club, recorded two pins and one major decision.

Xander Lucas, who also wrestles for the Rebels, finished fourth in the 12-and-under, 215-pound class. Lucas pinned Columbus' Kanyen Smith in his final match to secure his fourth place finish.

"Xander was wrestling up an age group and wrestled very tough," Blancarte said. "He did not get down after a tough loss and wrestled better than he had all year in his last match. I am proud of all my kids and the improvement made this season."

Other Louisburg kids to qualify for the state tournament were Colton Blue, Jackson Rankin, Brooks Rankin, Sawyer Blue, Brandon Doles, Brayden Yoder and Tyson Blancarte, who all wrestled for Rebels, and Owen Ebenstein, who competed in the Paola Club.



Wildcat Wrestling Club state qualifiers are (from left)

Gabe Bonham, Bronc Noll, Canaan Clayton and Hunter Day.

The newly formed Wildcat Wrestling Club also had a footprint at the state tournament as they sent four wrestlers to state in its first season.

Canaan Clayton, Bronc Noll, Gabe Bonham and Hunter Day also earned spots at state after finishing in the top four at districts. It was a big step forward in the program's development according to Bovaird, who is the club president and assistant coach.

"Our club is brand new," Bovaird said. "Canaan is a new kid and he first learned to wrestle in the basement of his house with his dad, and in his first competitive season, he qualified for state and took third in his district. Bronc is a fifth grader who has been chasing his goal the last couple years and he made it to state and is wrestling some of the best matches I have seen from him.

"I had two high school kids qualify, and unfortunately due to state rules I couldn't coach them, but I was there cheering for them. For both Hunter and Gabe that is two additional tournaments that they got, that they other teammates didn't."

Although they didn't leave with any medals, Bovaird considered the first year of the Wildcat Wrestling Club a success as they had 66 kids on the roster this past season and had 41 compete in tournaments.

"My goal is to not only get these kids wrestling, but to get their friends and little brothers coming in as well," Bovaird said. "My biggest goal from this year to next year, and it has nothing to do with wins or losses or with how many qualifiers we get, it is are we going to get kids coming back.

"As a high school coach, my biggest concern is that our numbers have been dwindling. The last two years, we have finished with 27 kids and we need more numbers. If we can

plant the seeds of love for the sport at this young age, and have positive memories of the sport, when they get to high school it will be easier for them to say they will give it a try.”

Bovaird credits the success of the program to his wife Emily, who spent hours organizing and getting the club going and his coaches that included Shawn Crossley, Jon Clayton, Adam Noll, James Auth, Sam Campbell, Trevor Finch, Janson Lanier, Brandon Ott, Bradley Trageser and Chad White.

“They all did phenomenal work with the kids,” Bovaird said. “I think we have a great coaching staff here and do a good job. It was kind of a crazy first year as Emily and I were trying to get this organized and all the kinks worked out, but we think it was a successful first season.”

Bovaird hopes that the club can be a good way to introduce wrestling to a young audience and get them acclimated before they hit the middle school level.

“We are lucky to have a middle school program, but four-and-a-half weeks is nothing to really get them acclimated to the sport,” he said. “My goal is to have the kids club vertically aligned with the high school program. We do that with our schools, why shouldn’t we do that with our youth sports? I am really excited for what the future holds.”