

Dixon named 4A Player of the Year; Lady Cats earn 6 all-league honors



Louisburg senior Anna Dixon was recently named as the Class 4A Player of the Year by the Kansas Volleyball Association and was also named to the all-state and All-Frontier League first teams.

The 2018 season was another one to remember for the Louisburg High School volleyball team.

Louisburg rolled to a perfect Frontier League season, which resulted in its first league title since 2015, and went on to finish runner-up in Class 4A for the second consecutive season.

So it is only fitting the honors are now rolling in for the Lady Cats and it starts with senior Anna Dixon.

Dixon, the 6-foot-3 outside hitter, was recently named the Class 4A Player of the Year by the Kansas Volleyball Association, and along with that was also selected to the all-state first team.

It was the second year in a row Dixon was named player of the year, as she had to share the honor last season with Rose Hill's Gracie Van Driel.

"It is an awesome honor and it feels great," Dixon said of the award. "I didn't mind sharing it with Gracie at all last year and she is such a great player too and so are all the other players in 4A. There was some great talent this season. You could tell that by how close all the matches were at state. It feels great to be recognized with that two years in a row.

"Honestly, I was little surprised to win it because typically the player of the year comes from whoever won the state championship, so I figured it would go to someone from Bishop Miege. I was pretty shocked, but excited at the same time."

The honors certainly didn't stop there as Dixon was all named to the All-Frontier League first team as she helped guide the Lady Cats to an undefeated league season.

Dixon led the Lady Cats in kills with 584 in 105 sets played. She also finished with 325 digs, as she played all six rotations and also had 50 aces and 42 blocks.

In her four years with the program, Dixon finished with 2,003 kills, which would place that total among the best the school has ever seen.

"Anna had another great season for us," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "She's a dynamic player on the court and one that is fun to watch. She truly enjoys playing, and she brought her love of the sport every day to practice and to every match. Between she and Carson (Buffington), they did a great job leading the team. They both stepped up and made huge plays when we needed it.

"Anna seemed to be our go to player the majority of the time, but as the season progressed the setters started to move our offense around more. That gave each player more of an opportunity to go up against a single block. Anna's numbers are pretty impressive. I don't have records from years before my time, but I'm going to venture to guess that she is the leader for career kills at Louisburg."

As much praise as Dixon received for her performance, the rest of the Lady Cats weren't able to crack the first team all-league honors.

In a season where Louisburg lost just one set all year in league play, Dixon was the lone player to earn first team honors.

Senior Carson Buffington and freshman Rinny McMullen were recognized as second team selections, while juniors Haley Cain, Reilly Ratliff-Becher and Riley Kallevig were named as honorable mentions.



Carson Buffington (left) and Rinny McMullen (right) were named to the All-Frontier League second team.

Eudora, which finished second in the league and never took a set from Louisburg, earned three first-team selections. Bonner Springs ended its year with a below .500 record, but had two first-team honorees.

“It would have been nice to see each of those players and a few others recognized higher within league,” Compliment said.

"I may be biased, but I think the players on this team were special and some of the best in the area. Their stats may not have been higher than others, but the balance and consistency they brought to the team this year was huge.

"Anna was our main offensive player with the most swings, but every player contributed to our success. You don't go undefeated in league and only drop one set, or place second at state without a well-balanced and talented team."

Buffington, who was the team's setter the last two years, was named to the second team as a hitter as she made the move to a new position this year. She finished the season with 130 kills.

As for McMullen, she shared setting responsibilities with fellow freshman Davis Guetterman, and McMullen led Louisburg in assists with 638, to go along with 202 digs and 40 aces on the season.

"I think it's great to see Carson get second team, especially since I changed up her position this year," Compliment said. "Carson didn't bat an eye and never backed down from a challenge. We started working on special plays, and Carson was excited to try something new. Some players would be hesitant to try something new, especially their senior year after they'd had success somewhere else. I was proud of how Carson took on her new position on the team. She was welcoming and a great leader to the two freshmen setters.

"Rinny didn't act like a freshman on the court. She plays with a lot of confidence and that showed throughout the season. I'm happy she was recognized for her play this season."



(From left) Haley Cain, Reilly Ratliff-Becher and Riley Kallevig were honorable mention all-league selections.

Cain and Kallevig were named to the honorable mention team as hitters, while Ratliff-Becher was selected as a libero.

Cain had a big season in the middle for Louisburg as she was second on the team with 191 kills. She also finished with 41 blocks and 42 aces on the year.

Kallevig, who played all six rotations for Louisburg, led the Lady Cats from behind the service line with 76 aces and was second on the team in digs with 325. She also finished with 105 kills.

As for Ratliff-Becher, she became a leader in the back row in her first season as the team's libero. She finished with a team-high 330 digs and also added 21 aces.

"I wish more of their hard work had been recognized, but I am proud of each of them and what they did this year for the team," Compliment said of Cain, Kallevig and Ratliff-Becher. "They are all returning next year and you can bet they are already talking about what they want to accomplish next season."

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE VOLLEYBALL

FIRST TEAM

HITTERS – Anna Dixon, Louisburg, senior; Keyana Cruse, Bonner Springs, sophomore; Riley Foltz, Eudora, senior; Jalyn Stevenson, Spring Hill, sophomore; Kim Whetstone, Bonner Springs, junior

SETTER – Keagan Shockley, Eudora, junior

DEFENSIVE SPECIALIST/LIBERO – Delaney Franklin, Eudora, junior

SECOND TEAM

HITTERS – Payton Bruce, Ottawa, senior; Carson Buffington, Louisburg, senior; Alli Frank, Spring Hill, sophomore; Alex Garcia, Eudora, senior; Taylor Knipp, Tonganoxie, senior

SETTER – Rinny McMullen, Louisburg, freshman

DEFENSIVE SPECIALIST/LIBERO – Alli Kerns, Ottawa, senior

HONORABLE MENTION

HITTERS – Haley Cain, Louisburg, junior; Paige Ellis, Baldwin, senior; Paige Fleming, Paola, senior; Audrey Flowers, Baldwin, senior; Alyssa Henness, Paola, senior; Riley Kallevig, Louisburg, junior; Kayla Kurtz, Baldwin, senior; Molly Olmstead, Ottawa, sophomore; Keagan Shockley, Eudora, junior

SETTERS – Shelby Rome, Piper, senior; Abby Wintersheid, Paola, senior

DEFENSIVE SPECIALIST/LIBERO – Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Louisburg, junior; Sammie LeBlanc, Spring Hill, senior; Abby Marcouillier, Tonganoxie, junior; Jada Simmons, Piper, senior; Abby Winterscheid, Paola, senior