

# Wildcat wrestling faces tough competition at Baldwin



**Louisburg senior Brian Houck competes against a Prairie View wrestler at 195 pounds during the December Duals on Friday at Baldwin High School.**

BALDWIN CITY – The Louisburg wrestling team certainly has a difficult schedule to start its season and it continued Friday when it traveled to the December Duals at Baldwin High School.

The tournament featured state-ranked teams and wrestlers, and although the Wildcats had to deal with some injuries, they were able to pull some positives after finishing with a 1-4 mark.

Louisburg ended the tournament with a 42-36 victory over Independence, but recorded losses to Prairie View (43-24), Baldwin (45-27), Burlington (61-18) and Oak Park, Mo., (52-15).

Injuries still continue to be a problem for Louisburg as it was open for four weight classes and had to wrestle from behind in every match. Senior Gabe Bonham (138) and Hunter Day (285) had to sit out due to injuries, while Austin Moore (220) and James Nelson (195) hope to come back later this season.

“I think we wrestled pretty tough in a lot of matches, but it’s tough to get the team totally focused when there’s that nagging reality lingering in the back of their minds,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “We’re giving up 24 points

each dual, and that's putting us in a pretty big hole every time.

"I'd originally intended the first month of competition to be all about bringing the guys together to create a sense of team unity as we get our first matches under our belts. With the circumstances of this season, it's been a humbling experience. We're doing well, and the guys are competing. I've seen positives out of every kid each time we've competed."

Sophomore Cade Holtzen continues his perfect season as he posted a 5-0 record on Friday with four pins. He was also named to the all-tournament team at 113 pounds.

Senior Blue Caplinger suffered his first loss of the season, but still finished with a 4-1 record with two pins. Caplinger, the No. 5-ranked wrestler at 170 pounds, wrestled No. 2 Brett Bober from Burlington, and came up short in a 5-1 decision for his lone defeat.

Freshman Brandon Doles also had a 4-1 day, with his only defeat coming to Cael Johnson from Burlington, who is ranked No. 3 in the state at 152 pounds.

Sophomores Ryan Owens (120 pounds), Anthony Welborn (138) and Ben Wiedenmann (182) all finished with a 3-2 record. Freshman Aiden Barker (145) was 2-3 and senior Brian Houck (195) was 1-4. Sophomore Jacob Briley (160) and junior Sam Kratochvil (220) were 0-5 and 0-4, respectively.

Louisburg will make its home debut today when it hosts Olathe West for a dual and then will travel to Tonganoxie for a tournament Saturday.

"There's still plenty of time in the season," Bovaird said. "We've been identifying areas to focus on improving, and the guys are getting some great workouts in during practice."