

Wildcats get back on track with home dual win



Louisburg sophomore Ben Wiedenmann works for a pin during his 182-pound match Wednesday against Olathe West at Louisburg High School. The Wildcats won the dual 47-29.

After a rough tournament last week, the Louisburg wrestling team needed a little pick-me-up and there was no better place for the Wildcats to do it than on their home mats.

Louisburg hosted Olathe West on Wednesday for its home opener and the Wildcats didn't disappoint their fans. The Wildcats recorded several key pins late in the match and came away with a 47-29 victory over the Owls on Youth Wrestling Night.

"On paper, heading into that dual, the odds were stacked against us," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "We're still battling injuries at some key weights, but we had an outstanding team effort where several guys stepped up and put the team first. It's tough to get kids to believe in the process – in the team aspect – at first, and I really am so proud of what these guys showed they were capable of doing."

Sophomore Cade Holtzen opened the dual with a technical fall win at 113 pounds to give Louisburg a 5-0 lead, but Luke Kelly lost by pin at 120 pounds as Olathe West grabbed the lead.

Another sophomore, Ryan Owens, jumped up two weight classes to give the Wildcats lead right back as he responded with a pin at 126 pounds to give Louisburg some much-needed momentum.

“Ryan opened the year wanting to wrestle at 106 pounds and I really think he showed the most guts by bumping up and wrestling at 126 to fill a gap,” Bovaird said.



Sophomore Jacob Briley won his 160-pound match by pin Wednesday against Olathe West.

Sophomore Anthony Welborn followed with a pin at 138 pounds after Louisburg was open at 132. Freshman Aiden Barker lost by technical fall at 145 pounds and the dual was tied at 17-all.

It was then where the Wildcats went on a roll as freshman Brandon Doles (152), sophomore Jacob Briley (160), senior Blue Caplinger (170), sophomore Ben Wiedenmann (182) and senior Hunter Day (285) all came up with pins for Louisburg.

Wiedenmann's match the biggest one for Louisburg as he defeated a state qualifier from a season ago to seal the win for the Wildcats despite having open weights at 195 and 220.

“Ben stepped up against a kid who was a state qualifier last year and had a great match that should be giving him some

much-needed confidence,” Bovaird said. “Ben is a sophomore bumping up a weight, and he knows that going into each match. Once he solidifies his confidence, he’s going to be even more dangerous.

“Then you have kid like Hunter, who’s been nursing an injured shoulder, gave up 40 pounds against his opponent, but because of his mat awareness and aggression, put the icing on the cake with his pin at the end of the dual. Jacob, who is filling in at 160 by bumping up a weight, got his first win of the season in a match that might have swung everything our way.”

The victory gives the Wildcats a much-needed confidence boost as they head into the Randy Starcher Invitational on Saturday at Tonganoxie High School.

“I told the guys afterwards that on paper, the dual could have been much different,” Bovaird said. “I take a conservative approach when analyzing a dual’s potential outcome, and I love how we’ve got a group of wrestlers who aren’t afraid to step up to a challenge. They don’t roll over and give up because we have so many open weights or our lineup is full of younger kids. They’ve got pride in the program, and I’m very thankful for how uncommon they are.

“Wrestling is a tough sport, and most kids can’t stomach the pressure, the exposure, and the challenge of it. Among other wrestling program seven, these guys are uncommon, and I wouldn’t trade them for anything.”