

LHS athletic trainer Damon Dennis honored with KWCA award



Louisburg athletic trainer Damon Dennis was honored last week with the Kansas Wrestling Coaches Association Support Personnel of the Year Award.

Damon Dennis knew something was up when Louisburg head wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird asked him if he would attend the team's postseason awards banquet.

In his close to three decades as serving as the USD 416 athletic trainer, Dennis (aka Doc D) had been to these types of things before and enjoys getting to look back on the season with athletes, coaches and parents. However, this time it wasn't all about the wrestlers.

Bovaird announced at the banquet that Dennis had been awarded Support Personnel of the Year by the Kansas Coaches Wrestling Association (KWCA). Dennis, along with other KWCA winners, will be recognized in October during an awards banquet in Salina.

Along with that award, he was also named as the 2019 Contributor of the Year by the LHS wrestling team.

"I was quite surprised," Dennis said. "I don't do the things that I do to get awards, but it is nice to know that you are appreciated."

Dennis, who spends his afternoons and evenings helping to mend the bumps and bruises of the Wildcat athletes while also running his Louisburg Chiropractic business, went above and behind the call of duty this season according to Bovaird.

During the season, Dennis helped a wrestler who suffered a serious concussion at practice and accompanied Bovaird and another district administrator to the emergency room to visit the wrestler and his family.

"It was an icy evening, and most people would let a phone call or text suffice, but Doc D took the extra step to show his support," Bovaird said. "Should we ever have an injury during practice time, Doc D has always been a phone call or a text away. At various points of the years, he's dropped everything at his chiropractic practice to rush to the school to attend to an injured athlete."

Winter weather provided a lot of obstacles for the Wildcats this past season and Dennis helped in that area as well. During the inclement weather, he arranged with the Louisburg Athletic Club for the varsity wrestlers to get in a good workout prior to the regional tournament since they couldn't practice at the school.

"He's gotten to know the families very well ever since he first came to Louisburg, more than 25 years ago," said Bovaird, who nominated Dennis for the award. "He has been here

long enough that
he's worked with multiple generations of LHS athletes. He
knows the community
very well, he's been extremely active in the community, and he
truly has been
an integral part of all our sports teams' successes.

"Doc D has become an extraordinary
part of our community, and his role is truly invaluable. These
awards are the
least we can do to thank this outstanding man for all he's
done."

As busy as Dennis was during this
wrestling season, he enjoys getting to know the athletes and
their families. He
also is willing to do whatever is needed to help the
wrestling, or any other
Wildcat athletic program, when problems arise.

"I am quite close with many of the wrestlers," Dennis said. "I
am
at the school every day after school to get the kids prepared
for practice or
evaluate any injuries that they are concerned about. I also
coordinated
the concussion testing and evaluate skin lesions as needed,
which can be quite
often with wrestlers. It stands to reason that by the time the
athletes are seniors,
I know them quite well. This year, we had one of the best
classes we have
ever had. I mean that athletically, academically and character
wise. We
had several injuries this year that were a bit of a challenge,
from Austin
Moore's broken collarbone to Blue Caplinger's concussion and
so on.

"It is the highlight of my day to go to the high school every day and be around the coaches and athletes. I appreciate them allowing me to be a part of the program in any capacity. I am always ready to help."