

Wildcats to feature mix of experience and youth as they hope for big season



Sophomore Braden Yows (left) and Ryan Haight battle for a 50-50 ball during the team's scrimmage last Saturday at Wildcat Stadium.

Earning a spot in the regional championship match last season was one of the few positives for the Louisburg boys soccer team.

It was a rough year that saw the Wildcats end with a 6-11 record in a season where they were plagued by injuries and other factors out of their control. This time around, Louisburg is ready for a new beginning and is going to do so with a lot of fresh faces.

Louisburg will feature a varsity squad that is made up of all four classes and will have several newcomers. In all, 38 players are out for soccer this season – which is the most under head coach Kyle Conley.

“We had a fantastic summer of preparation and improvement,” Conley said. “We struggled last year in meeting our standard,

but this group of boys wanted to get back to the previous years' culture and standard. This group worked their tails off, brought a ton of positive energy and had a very successful summer. We had 48 kids originally sign up for the team in May, but it got reduced down to 38 players.

"These young men have very high standards for themselves. They set the standard in the beginning of summer and have been pushing to live up to it all summer and preseason. This team is determined to get back to where we once were and their focus and dedication has shown this."

The Wildcats return a seven-member senior class that will play vital roles and it starts with Ryan Haight. The Louisburg defensive midfielder earned first-team All-Frontier League honors last season and will be one of the team leaders in 2019.

"Ryan had a fantastic summer," Conley said. "He is extremely fit and just excelled this summer. He will have his best season yet. He is poised and experienced. Those two characteristics will allow him to have a really solid year. His work ethic is one of the best I have ever had the opportunity to coach."



Senior Colin Cook makes a pass during the team's scrimmage last week.

Will

Frank, Garrett Rolofson, Landon Johnson, Colin Cook and David Perentis, who all saw varsity time a year ago, will play even bigger roles this season. Also included among the seniors is Emanuel Fries, a foreign exchange student.

Frank,

who has started the last two seasons, returns to lead the Wildcat defense after earning honorable mention all-league honors last season. Rolofson, who saw some time as the team's goalie last year, is the Wildcat starter in net.

Sophomore

Michael Seuferling, along with Frank, Haight, Ethan Showalter (junior) and Toby Espina (freshman) will all man the defensive side of the field

for Louisburg.

Perentis, Logan and Luke Faulkner (juniors), and Hunter Rogers (sophomore)

could also see playing time there as well.

“Rolofson had a fantastic summer and played really, really well,” Conley said. “He has become more confident and his leadership has been fantastic.

“I think this team is very balanced,” Conley said. “We added new pieces all over the field, but I feel these pieces have been improvements over what we previously had. We will have a variety of all classes represented within the varsity roster. It’s going to be a team that is going to be a lot of fun to watch as they develop their team chemistry and learn as a team.”



Louisburg head coach Kyle Conley believes his team is ready for a bounce-back year after the Wildcats finished with six wins a year ago.

The Wildcats will also have some experience at the midfield spot. Cook and junior Treston Carlson return with varsity experience, as do Logan and Luke Faulkner. Junior Ethan White, along with sophomores Isaac Guetterman and Jaden Vohs, could also see some varsity action.

Johnson, who missed most of last season with an injury after an all-league performance as a sophomore, will also be out to begin his senior season but Conley hopes he will be in the mix midway through the year.

“He’s a leader, but has been out for the past two years,” Conley said. “He has been a great teammate helping and teaching from the sidelines. He is eager to return and help this team.”

A lot of those new faces will be on the attacking side of the field as the Wildcats will feature a lot of youth.



Senior David Perentis (left) and freshman Cade Gassman battle for a 50-50 ball last week during the team's intrasquad scrimmage.

Sophomore

Braden Yows, who is a transfer from Missouri, will be one of the leaders at the midfield spot and freshmen Cade Gassman and Colin McManigal will see a lot of time at forward. Freshmen Ethan Ptacek and Gavin York will also garner a lot of minutes in the midfield.

"We added 17 new players to this team," Conley said. "Cade is poised to have an unbelievable year as a freshman. Braden is an extremely talented sophomore, who will help lead us. Toby (Espina) is a very skilled player who will help us at outside back this season. Colin has a motor that doesn't stop and will get solid minutes at forward for us. Gavin is a strong player who can play a lot of different positions and will play a very nice roll for us at the varsity level. Ethan is incredibility athletic and has a ridiculous speed."

The Wildcats will take part in, what Conley believes, is a very competitive Frontier League. It is the kind of schedule that he hopes his team can build on, and get better, as the season goes along.

“The league is going to be very interesting,” Conley said. “Several teams graduated a lot of seniors and some only graduated a few. I think this year’s league is going to be very balanced top to bottom. Our league is going to be a lot of fun to watch because each and every night, anything can and will happen.”

Louisburg will begin its season outside of league play on Sept.

3 when it hosts Fort Scott at 6 p.m. The Wildcats open Frontier League play at 6 p.m. on Sept. 5 in Paola. Junior varsity matches will begin at 4:30 p.m. in both games.