Wildcats take first at Fort Scott to open season



Louisburg junior Ben Wiedenmann recorded a 5-0 record to go along with two pins Friday during the Fort Scott Dual Tournament. The Wildcats finished first overall with a 4-1 record.

FORT SCOTT – The Louisburg wrestling team put together an impressive showing in its season opener Friday at the Fort Scott Dual Tournament.

All the Wildcats did was leave Fort Scott with a 4-1 record and a first-place trophy for their efforts as they kicked their season off in high gear. They finished in a tie for first with Fort Scott, but Louisburg won the tiebreaker based on head-to-head criteria.

Louisburg had just one open spot the entire tournament and the Wildcats even brought reserves to wrestle unattached, which would pay off later in the evening.

"One of the best things about Friday night was that we not only took a nearly full squad, but even when an injury happened, we were able to have a back-up there

to fill in," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "We're starting to get our program back up with numbers after last season's hiccup. With more bodies in the practice room, we're able to embrace the 'iron sharpens iron' mentality."

As it turned out, the Wildcats' second dual of the night against Fort Scott turned out to be their biggest one. Louisburg edged Fort Scott for a 40-37 victory after opening the tournament with a 39-27 win over Blue Valley Southwest.

Freshman Kaven Bartlett (113 pounds) opened with a pin and junior Ryan Owens (120) followed with a 14-5 major decision. Sophomore Brandon Doles (160), junior Ben Wiedenmann (170) and sophomore Aiden Barker (182) each had pins to score key points for the Wildcats.

The biggest victory for Louisburg came at 220 pounds when senior Sam Kratochvil earned a first period pin to secure the win over Fort Scott.

To end the night, the Wildcats also secured a 42-33 win over Anderson County in another close victory. Owens, Doles and Wiedenmann earned pins for Louisburg, but it was another senior that stepped up again for the Wildcats.



Sophomore Aiden Barker works for a pin at 182 pounds Friday in Fort Scott.

With sophomore A.J. Reed out with an injury, senior Hugh Staver filled in at 195 pounds and earned a first period pin to seal the win for the Wildcats.

“We had two guys really step up big for us in two of the duals,” Bovaird said. “Against Fort Scott, Sam Kratochvil got a huge pin for us at 220, and against Anderson County, Hugh Staver won big by pinning his opponent at 195. AJ Reed had been wrestling varsity at 195, but he hurt his ribs against Glendale-Springfield.

Hugh was there to fill in and he followed through with a big win. Our guys are gaining confidence every match, and that’s what I like to see.

“Xander Chennault had a great match against Fort Scott. He hasn’t wrestled since freshman year, but he worked hard to make 152 and when he wrestled the Fort Scott kid, who’s a pretty talented wrestler, he not only got the first takedown, but he locked up a cradle and nearly pinned him! Kaven Bartlett has also been doing great as a freshman at 113. His one loss was a 1-0 decision against a junior from Anderson County.”

The four team captains, junior Cade Holtzen (132), Owens, Doles and Wiedenmann, had just one loss between them as all four scored crucial points for the Wildcats throughout the night.

Owens was 5-0 with three pins and a major decision, while Doles had five wins and three pins and Wiedenmann was 5-0 with two pins. Holtzen was 4-1 with a pair of pins, and his lone loss was a 3-1 decision to Fort Scott’s Coby Burchett.

Barker also had a successful day at 182 pounds as he finished with a 4-1 record and two pins.

“All four of them really stepped up and competed well,” Bovaird said. “They had a combined record of 19-1 on the evening. Ryan looked dominant in his matches, and Ben looked like he was a lot closer to wrestling shape

than he realized.
It’s great to see both of them wrestling at their true weights this season,
rather than having to bump up.

“Brandon
is doing well at his higher weight class, and I’m pretty happy with how he’s
adapted to that move. Cade also looked pretty solid. His lone loss was to the
returning state runner-up, and I liked how he competed. That’s a winnable match
next time we see them.”

Louisburg
also defeated an unattached team 51-24, while their only loss came in a 52-30
setback to Glendale-Springfield, out of Missouri.

The
Wildcats will kick off their home season Thursday when they host the December
Duals. Burlington, Prairie View, Basehor-Linwood, Independence and Baldwin will
all compete in the dual tournament. The first match is set for 4 p.m.