

Wildcats get home dual win over Lawrence



Louisburg junior Ryan Owens brings Lawrence's Kevin Honas to the mat Tuesday at Louisburg High School. Owens upset the No. 4 ranked Honas and won by decision in the Wildcats' 48-30 victory.

When it comes to duals, the Louisburg wrestling team has been a little unlucky so far this season – whether it was because of open weights, injuries or bad matchups.

It all seemed to come together for the Wildcats on Tuesday when they hosted Lawrence High School. Louisburg put together a strong showing as it downed the Lions 48-30 and captured their first dual win since early December.

“It felt great getting a dual win, especially at home on our own mat in front of our crowd,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Lawrence is a young team, but then again, so are we. We ended up with two open weight classes, and that's been our struggle the last couple of years.

“I had several guys move up a weight to fill out our lineup, and

I love the fact that I can do that with our squad. If I didn't think it was a safe choice or that our guy could handle moving up a weight, I wouldn't do it. It's always a gamble, and I'm proud of how the squad stepped up and answered the challenge."

The dual started at 126 pounds when Cade Holtzen opened with a pin, but Lawrence recorded back-to-back pins against Luke Kelly and Jarrett Hoyle at 132 and 138 pounds, respectively to take the lead. Senior Harrison Laney responded with a big pin at 145 pounds to tie the match.

Lawrence took the lead once again after Louisburg was open at 152, but sophomores Brandon Doles and Aiden Barker came through in their matches. Doles and Barker both notched quick pins at 160 and 170 pounds to give the Wildcats a 24-18 advantage.

Louisburg would build on its lead from there as sophomore A.J. Reed won by pin at 182 pounds. Lawrence was open in the next two weight classes and the Wildcats were up 42-18 to all but seal the win.

After Lawrence won by pin in the heavyweight class against Elijah Eslinger, and the Wildcats were open at 106, the Lions cut the Wildcat lead to 12. Freshman Kaven

Bartlett sealed the victory with a win by decision.

Even

though the dual was basically over, the final match ended up being the most

competitive of the night. Junior Ryan Owens squared off with Lawrence's Kevin

Honas, who is currently ranked No. 4 in Class 6A.

Owens

pulled off the upset as he was able to win by decision and improved his record

to 19-1 on the season to end the evening on a strong note.

"Ryan's

win at 120 was a great conclusion for the dual," Bovaird said.

"Not only did he

win the match, but I saw a change in attitude and mindset with his

competitiveness. In fact, that's been the staple of his matches all season.

He's really grown and advanced.

"I

don't mind him not being ranked in 4A. He's going to surprise some people this

season, that's for sure. Our seasoned wrestlers stepped up and wrestled tough,

like I knew they would, and our newer wrestlers still gave it a great battle,

whether they won or lost."

Louisburg

is back in action Friday when the Wildcats travel to the Parsons Invitational.