

# Wildcats take third at state; record best finish in school history



*The Louisburg soccer team gathers together to celebrate its third-place state finish Saturday following the Wildcats' 3-0 victory over Rose Hill at Stryker Sports Complex in Wichita.*

WICHITA – As the Louisburg players huddled around their state plaque, many of them looked at it in awe and wonder.

“Hey guys, we won this,” a player shouted.

The statement was obvious at the time, but nonetheless, their excitement was more than warranted.

For the first time in program history, the Louisburg boys soccer team brought home a plaque from the state final four as the Wildcats defeated Rose Hill, 3-0, on Saturday in the third place match of the Class 4-1A state tournament at Stryker Sports Complex in Wichita.

It was only the second time in school history that the Wildcats had it made it this far, with the other being in 2016, when they finished fourth.

“There are only six teams in the entire state that get to end their year with a win and we wanted to be one of those teams,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We want to be able to hang up a banner on our field and we wanted a plaque so that no one

can forget what these kids earned and what they did this season. I am so proud of all of them.”

It was a program defining moment for the Wildcats as they began the weekend searching for a state championship, but lost 2-0 to Bishop Miege on Friday in the semifinals. Still, recording the best finish in school history is nothing for someone to hang their head about, and the Wildcats came out Saturday wanting to make sure they brought some hardware home.

“It’s absolutely crazy to think about what we have accomplished this year, partly because I have only played soccer in high school,” senior captain Logan Faulkner said. “Bringing a state plaque back will just be a reminder of what we did and how we reached our goal.”



***Louisburg’s Treston Carlson celebrates with Cade Gassman (26) following his goal late in the first half.***

Louisburg (16-2) didn't waste any time getting on the board against the Rockets as senior Treston Carlson scored on an assist from sophomore Cade Gassman to put the Wildcats up 1-0 just 10 minutes into the match.

Just a few moments later, Gassman was on the other end of a goal again, this time he assisted sophomore Colin McManigal who made it 2-0. Late in the first half, it was Gassman who was in front of the goal and just tapped it over the line to put the Wildcats up three and all but sealed the win.

"I felt like we played good as a team and it felt good to be up early in the game," Carlson said. "After the first goal, everyone felt less nervous and we played harder. It means a lot to me that I was a part of the team that was the best in school history. I was so happy when we won against Rose Hill."

Defensively, the Wildcats put together another strong performance as they completed their 11<sup>th</sup> shutout of the season.



***Sophomore goalie Mack Newell leaps into the air for one of his three saves Saturday against Rose Hill.***

The back line of Michael Seuferling, Toby Espina-Roca, Luke Faulkner, Ethan Showalter, along with midfielders Hunter Rogers, Haden Yeager and Isaac Guetterman made things difficult on the Rockets.

Rose Hill appeared it was going to get its first goal of the contest in the second half, but Showalter came through and knocked the ball off the line to preserve the shutout.

Goalies Mack Newell and Matthew Sword combined on the clean sheet, while Newell recorded three saves on the day.

“Rose Hill should have had one goal, but Showalter did an awesome job saving that one on the line and clearing it out,” Conley said. “It was a lot of fun to see the defense perform out there. The boys played well in the back and did their job.”

In all, the Wildcats had nine shots on goal, including three from Carlson, two from McManigal, two from Braden Yows, and one each from Ethan Ptacek and Gassman.



***Senior Logan Faulkner rises up for a header Saturday against Rose Hill.***

Then in the final 10 minutes, Conley played all of his seniors at the same time to give Carlson, Logan Faulkner, Luke Faulkner, Ethan Showalter, Haden Yeager, Dylan Armstrong, Caleb Shaughnessy, Weston Frank and Dacey Wieland an opportunity to go out in style.

It was a happy ending for Louisburg, following what was a disappointing loss to Bishop Miege in the state semifinals the day before.

The Wildcats put the pressure on early as Carlson and Gassman both had close shots on goal, but couldn't find the back of the net. The match remained scoreless midway through the first half, but Miege crossed the ball across the field and scored on a goal outside the 18.

Then in the second half, Miege scored again, this time as a shot ricocheted off a Wildcat player and into the goal to help the Stags to the championship match, where they beat Wichita-Trinity, 3-1.



***The Louisburg soccer team races onto the field immediately after its 3-0 win over Rose Hill in the state third place match.***

“Miege shadowed Braden (Yows) and tried to take away the middle of the field,” Conley said. “The first five minutes we

had two really good chances and we really needed one to go and it just never did. They got a good goal a little later and the second one was just unlucky, and that took the wind out of our sails. The last 20 minutes or so we were on them the whole time, we just couldn't get a good look. That is why they are the 5-time defending state champion."

The 2020 season will be one to remember in many ways for the Wildcat players. It was one that had to deal with COVID problems, including a two-week quarantine.

Then there were the good moments – and undefeated Frontier League title, a regional championship and a spot in the state final four. Saturday's victory put an ending on a year the Wildcats were hoping for.



***Members of the 2020 Louisburg soccer team are (front row, from left) manager Emma Christy, Ethan Ptacek, Gavin York, Toby Espina-Roca, Braden Yows, Treston Carlson, Logan Faulkner, Cade Gassman, Colin McManigal, Jaden Vohs, Owen Barber,***

***manager Olivia Barber; (back row) assistant coach Bobby Bovaird, Ethan Showalter, Dylan Armstrong, Caleb Shaughnessy, Dacey Wieland, Hunter Rogers, Matthew Sword, Weston Frank, Mack Newell, Haden Yeager, Michael Seuferling, Luke Faulkner, Austin Jamison, Isaac Guetterman and head coach Kyle Conley.***

“There was so much uncertainty,” Conley said. “You had to prep for the opponent, but you also had to worry about whether people were going to get COVID or not. The whole season was up in the air for a while and it was pretty stressful. The boys handled it well. We got quarantined, then we had to play four games in six days and we cleaned house. We almost didn’t give up a goal for a month and we just played really hard.

“The JV boys worked so hard and pressed us the whole time and made us get better. This is a program victory and not just for the 22 guys that are here. All those kids together made this happen, whether it was in the summer, preseason, tryouts, during the season – this is just a credit to all of them.”