

Holtzen earns state bid, breaks school record in the process



Louisburg senior Cade Holtzen tries to keep Fort Scott's Coby Burchett on the mat Saturday during the Class 4A sub-state championship match in Chanute.

CHANUTE – After his freshman year, Cade Holtzen set some big goals for himself.

However, at the time, it might have seemed a little out of reach. Holtzen garnered 45 wins his freshman year, which is still the school record for most wins in a season and gave him a head start of possibly getting the school record for career wins.

It was going to be a difficult chore as Austin Hood, a 3-time state champion, set the record with 150 wins in 2012. Still, Holtzen has always had his eye on the prize.

“We had a lot of matches that year and I was put in a situation where I was able to get a lot of wins,” Holtzen said. “I have always had lofty goals and this was one of them.”

Holtzen rewrote the record books Saturday at the Class 4A sub-state tournament in Chanute. Going into the tournament, he was sitting at 149 wins, but the Louisburg senior won the 132-pound sub-state crown with a 3-0 record, which put him at 152

wins in his career.

It was an emotional day for Holtzen as he achieved milestones in each of his three matches.

Holtzen recorded win No. 150 to tie the record with a first period pin of Frontenac's Peyton Wilderman. In his next match, Holtzen officially qualified for state in his semifinal match as he defeated Tonganoxie's Noah Bailey in a 5-2 decision and also broke the school record at the same time.



"It was a really good day and I am really excited about everything that happened," Holtzen said. "I was hoping to get

it a little earlier, but to finally get the record made it a spectacular day. It is really awesome. Just want to thank my team, coaches and my parents for supporting me throughout this whole journey. Without them I wouldn't be winning sub-state and breaking school records."

Then came the sub-state title as Holtzen, who is currently ranked No. 3 in the state, outlasted No. 4 Coby Burchett from Fort Scott in a 4-1 decision.

"He is a tough kid," Holtzen said of Burchett. "He was looking for some throws and that was something different that I haven't had to deal with. I had to wrestle in better positions and a little more cautions from other positions in neutral. I feel like I could have wrestled better toward the end. I gave up a couple silly stalling calls there, but I feel I wrestled pretty good overall."

It was the third title in as many weeks for Holtzen as he won district and regional championships the two weeks before. He now has a 35-1 record and is one of eight wrestlers remaining in the state.

"This is a big deal for me," he said. "I said last year after my last match that my goal was to win a state title so that is what I am gunning for. Winning the sub-state title gets me that much closer to my goal. It will be tough at state and any of those guys can win it on any given day. It is a tough bracket, but I am looking forward to it."

Holtzen has been a staple of winning for the Louisburg program as has earned two state medals in his three years and is looking for a third this Saturday at the state tournament in Salina.



Cade Holtzen takes down Tonganoxie's Noah Bailey in the 132-pound semifinals Saturday in Chanute.

"Cade has been a consistent force for our program for the past four years, and I was so excited when I realized that he'd be within grasp of breaking the school record this year," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "With all the uncertainty of Covid-19 this year, I was worried that Cade (and others) wouldn't have the chance to reach his full potential this season. He's been more focused and dedicated than I've ever seen him, and over the last four years, he's very rarely lacked focus and dedication to any extent. He's set a lofty goal for himself, and I think he's within reach of attaining that goal."

That other goal – winning a state title.

Holtzen will open the tournament against Pratt's Kaiser Pelland, who he beat in the blood round at the state tournament last year. If he wins, he could meet Mulvane's Chadwick Stahl, who is a 2-time state runner-up.

No matter who he faces, Holtzen is going to leave it all out on the mat in his final go-round.

“You can always get better, but mentally I feel like I am stronger than anyone in the state,” Holtzen said. “If it ever comes down to a close match, I am just going to gut it out more than they can.”