

Younggren pins down state berth in convincing fashion



Louisburg senior Alec Younggren gets a pin of Prairie View's Noah Nordgren on Saturday during the Class 4A sub-state tournament.

CHANUTE – Alec Younggren has struggled more to break a sweat this season than he has to beat his opponents.

It was much of the same Saturday during the Class 4A sub-state tournament in Chanute. Younggren spent a total of about four minutes in his three matches combined on his way to another title.

Younggren won the 220-pound sub-state championship in convincing fashion with three pins and kept his perfect season intact.

"Since my sophomore and junior year, I have always been gunning for a state title and to be where I am means so much to me and it has been an amazing experience for me," Younggren said. "Being at a new school, coming to new places and seeing different opponents, it just means so much to be able to get this point in my senior year."

The Louisburg senior transferred to the school from Olathe South, where he finished third at state in Class 6A last year. Since his last loss in the 6A semifinals, Younggren has won 37 straight matches, including a 35-0 record this season.

Younggren has been as dominant as any wrestler in the state and it showed Saturday.

He opened the tournament with a pin of Prairie View's Noah Nordgren in 52 seconds and then pinned Topeka-Hayden's Clayton Stephenson in 57 seconds.

In a rarity, Younggren had to go to the second period in the championship match, but pinned Holton's Dalton Roush in 2 minutes and 26 seconds.

"He didn't really make me mad till the second period, so I had to get after him a little bit," Younggren said. "I felt I wrestled pretty good. I feel like I can get better every day and every time I step on the mat I need to improve somehow. I feel amazing right now and I can't wait for state."

Getting past the first period has been a rarity for Younggren. The Louisburg senior has 23 pins on the season, and only five of his matches have gone past the second period.



Alec Younggren takes Topeka-Hayden's Clayton Stephenson to the mat Saturday during the semifinals of the Class 4A sub-state in Chanute. Younggren pinned Stephenson in 57 seconds.

Only one of his 35 wins have gone the distance, which was a 12-1 major decision against a Shawnee Heights wrestler back in December.

The one setback with all of the early wins has been trying to stay in wrestling shape as he hasn't logged many minutes on the season. So Younggren has been doing different things to stay in shape.

"You have to push yourself inside and outside of practice," Younggren said. "You have to find different ways to build your endurance, even if it is not on the mat. Whether it is running or working out more, I just have to get better any way I can."

Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird has seen his hard work first

hand and he knows Younggren has been a great fit with the Wildcat team.

“He’s been a great leader in the practice room,” Bovaird said. “There’s always something about him that rubs off on his teammates. He’s excited for the postseason, not because he’s ready for it to be over, but because he’s itching to get after his own goals. He puts himself through extra workouts all the time, and he helps coach his teammates whenever he gets the chance.

Even though it is Younggren’s first season with the program, he has fit right in with the Wildcat team. He already knew Ryan Owens and Cade Holtzen from kids wrestling, which made the transition pretty seamless.

Holtzen will join Younggren at the state tournament this Saturday in Salina. Holtzen also won a sub-state title at 132 pounds.

“It is awesome,” Younggren said. “When I first got here I really didn’t know a whole lot of people and (Cade) was one of the first one to talk to me and helped me get to know some other people. It really means a lot that I can spend my senior year and have Cade go to state with me. I feel really welcome here in Louisburg.”