

OPINION: History on the hardwood leaves lasting memories for Louisburg



Members of the Louisburg sub-state champion basketball teams are (front row, from left) Emma Lohse, Maverick Rockers, Sierra Hahn, Cade Gassman, Brooklyn Diederich, Isaac Guetterman, Delanie Tally, Michael Seuferling; (middle row) Andy Hupp, Delaney Wright, Ben Guetterman, Megan Foote, Konnor Vohs, Brianne Kuhlman, Weston Guetterman, Adyson Ross; (back row) Emma Prettyman, Julian Margrave, Jordan Mynsted, Mack Newell, Alyse Moore, Colyer Wingfield, Madilyn Melton and Dawson Barnes.

Almost a year ago I was sitting at the first round of the Big 12 tournament, excited for my favorite time of the year – March Madness.

Life has changed a lot since then.

I still vividly remember a phone call from my wife while watching hoops from the now T-Mobile Center. There was a lot of worry in her voice.

She had no idea why people were fighting over toilet paper in Price Chopper. Why were they panicking over something they had no idea what it was yet? It wasn't food or water for heaven's sake!

The next day was even more puzzling. Tournaments across the

country were cancelled. State high school events were stopped in their tracks and never finished.

Even worse news came as spring sports were later cancelled and were people were forced to shelter in their homes. We more or less become a ghost country.

A year later, our lives are completely changed. We are having to do things differently, be more cautious and for some, outlook on every day life is incomparable to what we had before.

One thing that has risen back is March Madness and Louisburg is right in the thick of it all.

In a year where they have been challenges with practices and playing games due to COVID-19, both the Wildcat boys and girls basketball teams have put together one of the best seasons in school history.

It was an incredible weekend at Louisburg High School as the boys won their first sub-state title since 2017 on Friday. The girls earned a state berth for the first time since 1974 – breaking a 47 year drought – on Saturday.



The Louisburg boys are onto their first state tournament since 2017.

Both teams are currently ranked in the top five in the state and are one of eight teams left standing in Class 4A. It is something that has never been done in school history.

That is a feat among itself, but do it in these challenging times says a lot about the players and coaches of both programs.

Boys head coach Ty Pfannenstiel and girls head coach Adrienne Lane have done a great job keeping their players focused and limiting distractions throughout the season.

For the girls team, though, it didn't start out that smoothly.

Many members of the Lady Cats were forced to quarantine when practice began in November and they didn't have their complete

team on the court until the first game in early December. They never got a chance to practice together as team before that season opener against Tonganoxie.

Despite that, they won their first eight games and ended the season with an 16-4 record and finished second in a tough Frontier League.



The Louisburg girls basketball team broke a 47-year state drought Saturday against Fort Scott.

They are now onto the state tournament for the first time since 1974 – the second year of the girls state basketball.

As for the boys, they have faced an up and down season of their own, but the Wildcats have to put together a strong finish to a year that put them as the No. 2 team in the state rankings.

Louisburg has won eight of its last nine games, with the Wildcats' only loss coming to state ranked Shawnee Mission South, a Class 6A program.

Both teams are loaded with talent, but the one thing the two have in common is a strong senior class. In most years, seniors provide leadership and it is evident on both sides.



Louisburg head coach Ty Pfannenstiel poses with his seniors following the Class 4A sub-state championship.

Weston Guetterman, Ben Guetterman, Konnor Vohs, Andy Hupp and Dawson Barnes have all played vital roles on this year's boys team. Add in juniors Julian Margrave – who is the team's leading scorer – Michael Seuferling and Maverick Rockers and the Wildcats have a solid rotation that stacks up with some of the best in the state.

For the girls, Madilyn Melton, Megan Foote, Brooklyn Diederich and Alyse Moore have played basketball together since the seventh grade when they recorded a perfect season for LMS. Many of them have played basketball since they were little and have a deep love for the game.

It shows on the court as those four girls, along with juniors Delaney Wright, Jordan Mynsted and sophomores Brianne Kuhlman

and Adyson Ross, play with a reckless abandon – especially on the defensive end of the floor.



Louisburg seniors (from left) Megan Foote, Alyse Moore, Madilyn Melton and Brooklyn Diederich embrace after winning the sub-state championship.

Folks, this type of stuff doesn't happen every year when it comes to state basketball – unless your name is Bishop Miege or McPherson. For a school to put two teams in the state tournament is a remarkable story.

School history had already been made, but there is much more to be had.

If the boys win tonight, the Wildcats will – at worst – tie for the best finish in program history when Louisburg took third in 1948.

As for the girls, well if they haven't already accomplished enough to break a long state drought, a win over Labette County on Tuesday would give the Lady Cats the best finish in school history for a program that began in the early 70s.



Louisburg girls coach Adrienne Lane crosses out 1974 and writes 2021 to mark the end of the Lady Cats' state drought. Louisburg already made history in the fall when the girls cross country and boys soccer team each finished third at state and had the best season in its program's tenure.

So, why not them?

Wildcat fans, for those of you who haven't joined the hype train yet, there is still plenty of room. Find yourself a voucher and come out and support both teams as they both try to accomplish something that is unprecedented for Louisburg athletics.

Enjoy these teams while we have them – they don't come around

often.