

Six Wildcats named to all-league wrestling team



In a normal season, the wrestling all-league selections would be handled in a league tournament and not by vote.

However with COVID-19 precautions, the Frontier League tournament was cancelled this season, but the league coaches still wanted to honor their wrestlers in some way.

The coaches got together for a vote and put together the All-Frontier League wrestling team. For Louisburg, the Wildcats earned five spots on the boys side, and an honorable mention selection on the girls squad.

Cade Holtzen (132 pounds), Aiden Barker (182) and Alec Younggren (220) were named first team all-league. Ryan Owens (120) and Kaven Bartlett (126) were selected to the third and honorable mention team, respectively.

On the girls side, junior Bailey Hallas was named as an honorable mention at 109 pounds.

“Historically, our ‘all-league’ selections have been determined by the league tournament,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “It was objective and results-based. This year was a little different – it was based on season performance and honors determined by coaches during a Zoom meeting after the season. Luckily, wrestling coaches are experienced with seeding meetings for regular tournaments and we’re able to look at objective criteria to determine seeds: head-to-head,

record against common opponents, record against strong competition, tournament finishes, and post-season performance. When we met to talk about our selections, there was very little debate because the results would speak for themselves.”

Younggren had an historic season for the Wildcats, one that took him to the 220-pound state championship match, where he ultimately finished second with a 37-1 record. It was Louisburg’s highest placing at state since 2012.

After the season Younggren, along with Holtzen, were both selected to represent Kansas in the Metro Classic last month.



Louisburg senior Alec Younggren was an all-league first team selection at 220 pounds after a state runner-up finish this year.

“It’s not often that a kid like Alec moves into a new school for his senior year,” Bovaird said. “The great thing about

Alec is that he had no trouble becoming a part of the Wildcat wrestling family. It helped with him being a football player, as well as with him knowing Cade and Ryan from the Olathe Southside youth wrestling program, but with the rest of the team, it quickly seemed as though Alec had always been a part of the program. He's one of the strongest kids I've stepped on the mat with, and he knows the sport. He's done the international styles of wrestling (freestyle and greco-roman), and he's got an agility that you don't often find with kids in that weight.

"He's a great leader on the mat with his competitiveness and his physicality. In the short time he was a part of our program, he had a phenomenal influence on his teammates. I felt he deserved to be a state champion, and I wish that match had done differently. At the end of the day, though, I know he gave it everything, and he's got nothing to be ashamed of."

As for Holtzen, the Louisburg senior finished third at state and ended his season with a 38-2 record. He also became just third wrestler in school history to win three state medals and just the eighth wrestler to become a 4-time state qualifier.

He's got school records for most in a career (wins, takedowns, match points, nearfall-2, nearfall-3, and team points) and most in a season (wins and nearfall-2), and he's 17th in the entire state of Kansas for most career team points.



Senior Cade Holtzen was named to the All-Frontier League first team at 132 pounds after this third place finish at state.

“Cade’s become a major fixture in the pages of Louisburg wrestling history, and I’m very proud to have had the chance to be a part of his time here at LHS,” Bovaird said. “He’s a two-year team captain, and last season he was honored by the National Wrestling Coaches Association and the US Marine Corps as a Character and Leadership All-American.

“This season, Cade set the bar pretty high when it came to what’s expected for hard work. He stayed late after practice, and he came in early before school to get extra time on the mat, along with Alec Younggren. He’s been a role model for his teammates, whether it’s with our mindset training, the skills on the mat, or the mentoring of younger kids.”

Barker, a junior, had a big season for the Wildcats and was one win away from making the state tournament, or the final eight in his 182-pound weight class. He ended his season with 27-10 record.



Junior Aiden Barker was named a first team All-Frontier League wrestler at 182 pounds.

“Aiden has progressed so much since I first got to work with him,” Bovaird said. “He began working with the Wildcat Wrestling Club in middle school, and I’ve had the pleasure of seeing him mature and develop in the sport ever since. He’s dedicated himself to off-season wrestling and weight-lifting, and he is starting to reap the benefits.

“He’s become a great team leader and is getting more and more confident with his abilities. Add on top of that, he’s got a crazy sense of toughness that’s tough to match. He spent the whole season getting into it with Alec every day at practice. That’s a 40-pound difference, and Alec was never the kind of partner to take things easy.”

Owens, who was a state placer as a junior, was also a win away from making it to the final eight at state. The 120-pound

senior ended his season with a 25-8 record and a sixth-place finish at the sub-state tournament.

“There’s something about Ryan that has always made his contributions to the program immeasurable,” Bovaird said. “He’s tough as nails, he’s open to new approaches to making his techniques work, and he’s got a sense of maturity that is inspiring to his teammates. He made it to state as a sophomore giving up nearly 7-8 pounds every match, and as a junior he was a state placer.



Louisburg senior Ryan Owens was selected to the All-Frontier League third team at 120 pounds.

“While I really wish his season had ended differently, I also understand that 120 is one of the toughest and deepest weights year-after-year. On any given day, that sub-state bracket could have been played out differently. Ryan went out and battled in his matches, and that’s one of his greatest characteristics. He sets a goal and pursues it with an uncanny

focus and dedication.”

Bartlett competed in one of the toughest weight classes in the state – 126 pounds. It was that way in the league as well, but the Louisburg sophomore still earned honorable mention honors after a 21-15 season.

“This year especially, Kaven has been the epitome of toughness and hard work,” Bovaird said. “Combine those two traits with his great wrestling abilities, and you’ve got a kid who’s going to win a lot of matches. This year he certified at 120 pounds., but he made the sacrifice to compete at 132 to start off the year.



Louisburg sophomore Kaven Bartlett was named honorable mention all-league at 126 pounds.

“After Cade moved up to 132, he was a little closer to his natural weight. Even though he gave up that weight in most of his matches, he went out there and wrestled his hardest. Both matches he lost at sub-state were 1-0. It’s disappointing for

him that he didn't go further, but at the same time, he's right on the verge of turning the corner. The next two years will be special seasons for him."

Hallas made history on the girls side as she was the first female wrestler in Louisburg history to take part in the postseason tournament and made it to regionals this year.

"Bailey made a huge commitment to try out wrestling, and I'm so proud of her for taking those steps," Bovaird said. "She became our first ever girl to compete in the post-season, and she earned her way to the regional tournament this year. She's an athletic young lady with a great sense of competitiveness. I'm definitely excited to see what she can do next season, as well as how she will help the program grow by bringing in more girls."

BAILEY HALLAS

JUNIOR
109 LBS.

Honorable Mention All-League
2021 KSHSAA 4A Regional Qualifier



The awards weren't done there as the Wildcat team earned was named to the KWCA All-Academic first team.

Barker, Brandon Doles, Holtzen and Luke Kelly were named to the individual all-academic first team, while Jarrett Hoyle and Hallas were selected as honorable mentions.

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE WRESTLING

106 pounds

First team: Brock Coleman, Tonganoxie, sophomore

Second team: Zack Cunningham, Ottawa, junior

Third team: Ayedin Johnson, Baldwin, freshman

HM: Ja'Diz Simmons, Piper, junior

113 pounds

First team: Braeden Moore, Tonganoxie, freshman

Second team: Ethan Cook, Bonner Springs, freshman

Third team: Macoy Johnson, Paola, sophomore

HM: Dalton Dempsey, Baldwin, freshman

120 pounds

First team: Clayton Younger, Paola, freshman

Second team: Trevor Andrew, Bonner Springs, senior

Third team: Ryan Owens, Louisburg, senior

HM: Nakos Benton, Baldwin, junior

126 pounds

First team: Grayson Sonntag, Tonganoxie, junior

Second team: Parker Guge, Ottawa, freshman

Third team: Ryan Pankov, Paola, sophomore

HM: Kaven Bartlett, Louisburg, sophomore

132 pounds

First team: Cade Holtzen, Louisburg, senior

Second team: Noah Bailey, Tonganoxie, freshman

Third team: Charlie Seller, Paola, sophomore

HM: Liam Sutton, Ottawa, senior

138 pounds

First team: Cruz Lara, Bonner Springs, senior

Second team: Cael Lynch, Eudora, senior

Third team: Collin Creach, Ottawa, junior

HM: Kelson McAllister, Spring Hill, junior

145 pounds

First team: Cassius Vanderpool, Bonner Springs, senior

Second team: Derek Duffett, Tonganoxie, senior

Third team: Holden Andrews, Eudora, senior

HM: Josh Broyles, Baldwin, senior

152 pounds

First team: Gabriel Bailey, Tonganoxie, junior

Second team: Will Schreiner, Eudora, senior

Third team: Shane Daniels, Bonner Springs, junior

HM: Joel Brown, Ottawa, sophomore

160 pounds

First team: Dayton Fraser, Eudora, junior

Second team: Colton Brusven, Tonganoxie, freshman

Third team: Carson Gleghorn, Paola, senior

HM: Jacob Waller, Bonner Springs, senior

170 pounds

First team: Kael Lane, Ottawa, senior

Second team: Dakota Whitaker, Eudora, senior

Third team: Jack Harvey, Baldwin, freshman

HM: Ben Timpe, Paola, senior

182 pounds

First team: Aiden Barker, Louisburg, junior

Second team: Wyatt Sink, Ottawa, junior

Third team: Hunter Benedict, Tonganoxie, sophomore

HM: Nate Criqui, Eudora, senior

195 pounds

First team: Branden Martin, Tonganoxie, senior

Second team: Draven Pipken, Spring Hill, sophomore

Third team: Jared Ferguson, Ottawa, junior

HM: Dakota Mortell, Bonner Springs, junior

220 pounds

First team: Alec Younggren, Louisburg, senior

Second team: Toby Thomas, Baldwin, senior

Third team: Andrew Campbell, Spring Hill, junior

HM: Devon Moncrief, Eudora, senior

285 pounds

First team: Tony Caballero, Bonner Springs, junior

Second team: Denver Gardner, Spring Hill, senior

Third team: Aaron Clevenger, Ottawa, junior

HM: Jason Newton, Paola, sophomore