

Wildcats outlast Eudora for fifth regional title in five years



The Louisburg girls soccer team hoists its regional championship trophy following the Wildcats' 2-1 double overtime win over Eudora on Thursday at Wildcat Stadium.

The one thing that the Louisburg girls soccer program has known is regional championships.

In the team's previous four seasons, the Wildcats have won regional titles in all four and has never known what it is like to lose a regional championship game.

Louisburg still doesn't know, thanks to some heroics.

In a double overtime match with Eudora on Thursday at Wildcat Stadium, freshman Lexi Hampton scored the game-winning goal on an assist from Reese Johnson to give Louisburg the 2-1 win over the Cardinals.

"Winning the regional title meant so much to me and the team because we have worked so unbelievably hard to get where we are," Louisburg senior Olivia Barber said. "It just proved to us and others that hard work pays off and to never underestimate us."

The Wildcats are now onto the state quarterfinals for the fifth straight season after missing last season due to the

COVID-19 pandemic. However, the biggest difference from teams of the past is Louisburg did it with almost a brand new roster.

Louisburg features a lineup full of freshmen and sophomores, and many thought it would be rebuilding year for the Wildcat program.



Louisburg sophomore Adyson Ross leaps in the air to knock a ball down against Eudora.

“We legitimately replaced 15 kids from that roster in 2019 and half of our squad is freshmen and sophomores,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “Everyone said this was going to be a down year or a rebuilding year, but if 11-6-1 and a regional championship is a rebuilding year, then ok. These girls have grinded from day one till now and have improved so much. They have raised the standards for themselves. They didn’t want to

give up and they didn't want to stop."

Louisburg and Eudora, which split their contests earlier this season, played to a scoreless first half. The two teams made up for it with a lot of action in the second half and in the overtimes.

Wildcat sophomore Tehya Harvey found herself in the right place at the right time early in the second half. The Eudora goalie went to dive on a ball into the box, but it squirted away and Harvey found an empty net to put Louisburg on top.

Eudora's Kate Erpelding tied the match 10 minutes later as she scored on a shot from about 25 yards out, over the head over Louisburg goalie Sierra Hahn to tie the match.

Just minutes earlier, Hahn knocked a a Cardinal shot away from the net to keep them off the board for the time being.



Louisburg freshman Lexi Hampton races to celebrate with her teammates after she scored the game-winning goal with 12 seconds left in the second overtime.

The match then went into overtime – then into double overtime. It appeared like it was headed for a third, but Hampton struck at the right time.

With 12 seconds remaining, Johnson passed the ball into the box and Hampton was there to put it away and send the Wildcats onto the state quarterfinals.

“When Reese made that incredible pass into the box and Lexi scored, I was so happy,” Louisburg senior Madi Quinn said. “I was so proud of us for not giving up and persevering even though we were all so tired. I think we played pretty well, we were aggressive with the ball and were outworking them.”

The game-winning play wasn’t anything new to the Wildcat

players. It was a play that Conley has stressed to them on a daily basis.

“Reese did a great job attacking the endline, played it across and Lexi was right there to come through and hit it,” Conley said. “We have practiced that play every day in practice and it finally paid off. It was awesome and a great finish for a freshman. Couldn’t be happier for these girls.”



Members of the regional champion Louisburg girls soccer team are (front row, from left) Catie Lemke, Reese Johnson, Emma Christy, Olivia Barber, Madi Quinn, Ruth Minster, Kennady Wilkerson, Missy Meigs, Kassidi Lomax, Nova Ptacek, Lola Edwards; (back row) head coach Kyle Conley, Sierra Hahn, Hailey Sword, Bronwynn Williams, Lexi Hampton, Tehya Harvey, Bree Gassman, Liz Guzman, Brianne Kuhlman, Adyson Ross, Sammy McDaniel, Macy Lemke and assistant coach Jordan Roquemore.

Louisburg did have opportunities throughout the match and had 10 shots on goal. Johnson, Hampton and Harvey all had two, while Hailey Sword, Ruth Minster, Nova Ptacek and Lola Edwards

each had one.

Louisburg will now try for its fourth straight trip to the Class 4-1A state final four Tuesday when the Wildcats travel to face off with No. 1 seed Heritage Christian (14-2).

The match is set to begin at 4:30 p.m. at Heritage Christian and the Wildcats are hoping to keep the momentum going.

“Heritage Christian will be a challenge for sure, but so was Eudora,” Quinn said. “If we walk off the bus with confidence and the right attitude, the game is ours. I am excited to see what will happen, but being this far into regionals, games like this go to double overtime easy. If we play our game, we can do great things.”