

Wildcats finish fourth at Class 4-1A state tournament



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

WICHITA – The Louisburg girls soccer team may have left the Class 4-1A Kansas State Girls Soccer Championships with a pair of losses, but the Wildcats took a lot of pride in what they accomplished.

For the fourth straight season, Louisburg advanced to the state final four and the Wildcats finished fourth in the state – a far cry where many people thought they would end up. The Wildcats lost a pair of 2-1 matches to Mulvane and then to McPherson in the third-place match at the Stryker Sports Complex in Wichita.

Louisburg, which lost 12 seniors from a season that didn't happen due to COVID, returned just three varsity players. Despite all that, the ended up being one of the top teams in the state.

“Playing in another state tournament was everything I could

have dreamed of,” Louisburg senior Olivia Barber said. “We may not have won either game, but just making it there is a great accomplishment because we were still one of the top four teams in the state.”

On Friday in the state semifinals, the Wildcats were just minutes away from playing in the state championship. Against Mulvane, freshman Lexi Hampton scored to give Louisburg a 1-0 lead early in the second half.



Louisburg senior Madi Quinn heads the ball out during Saturday's third-place game in Wichita.

It didn't stay that way for long.

Mulvane answered with a goal 10 minutes later to tie it, and then late in the second half, scored the go-ahead goal.

Louisburg had chances close to goal to tie it, but the

Wildcats couldn't find the back of the net and were sent to the third-place match to play McPherson.

"Mulvane has two really good players and I thought we did a good job of taking away their opportunities," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "They just got a good backside ball that we weren't prepared for, then the other one was just a bad bounce and they were able to run through it and get one.

"We had a couple chances inside the six to at the very least tie it, and maybe win the game, but we just couldn't get it to go. You know I thought we were the better team overall, but for one reason or another it just didn't work out for us."



Louisburg freshman Lexi Hampton battles a McPherson player for the ball Saturday in Wichita.

The Wildcats faced a McPherson team that had just come off a double-overtime loss to Bishop Miege in their semifinal game, and once again, the Wildcats struck first.

After a penalty just outside the box, Barber took the direct kick early in the match and the shot sailed over the goalie's outstretched arms to give Louisburg the 1-0 lead.

"I'd scored goals before, but I'd never felt the way I did when I scored against McPherson," Barber said. "Making that goal definitely made all of us play harder because it proved

to all of us that we were in it.

“Going into the game against McPherson we were exhausted. We left it all on the field the night before and were a bit nervous because we knew how tough they were. I was so proud of us for staying in the game against McPherson and not giving up.”



Olivia Barber sends a shot over a wall of McPherson players and into the back of the net Saturday for the Wildcats' lone goal.

McPherson started to take control of the possession midway through the first half, but junior goalie Sierra Hahn kept them scoreless with several diving saves. The Bullpups eventually broke through to tie the match right before halftime.

Then with 15 minutes left in the second half, McPherson scored

the game-winning goal to hand the Wildcats their second straight 2-1 loss.

"We all were so admired and proud of each other going to the third place game as we knew we easily could've not been in the tournament at all," senior captain Madi Quinn said. "Out of all the teams I have played with, I have never been so motivated to work hard for the girl next to me.

"I am so excited to see what these girls accomplish in the coming years in the program. I have been so honored to be a part of this program as I have gained another family."



Louisburg goalie Sierra Hahn slides on her knees for a save against McPherson.

Louisburg, which finished its season with a 12-8-1 record, will have several returning players back from this team. However, the fight and never quit attitude is what Conley

appreciated the most.

“They just came out and battled all year long and they never quit no matter what the score was,” Conley said. “As a coach, I know that these girls gave me everything they had and they took us pretty far. They didn’t quit entire season and that is what got them to this point. I am so proud of these group of girls.”