

Wildcats go 1-2 at December Duals in Baldwin



BALDWIN CITY – The Louisburg wrestling team traveled to Baldwin High School on Friday as the Wildcats took part in the December Duals.

Louisburg squared off with Independence, Baldwin and Gardner-Edgerton in hopes of gaining more experience on the season for a team filled with freshmen and sophomores.

The Wildcats were able to do that as they went 1-2 on the day with a 54-26 win over Gardner. Louisburg also had a pair of close setbacks with a 39-37 loss to Baldwin and fell 43-32 to Independence.

“I think psychologically, we’re in a good place,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Wrestling is a tough season for lots of reasons, but chiefly because of the timing. These kids have to monitor their weights and work hard to get in wrestling shape really quickly, while at the same time they’re juggling all of their music concerts and fall semester finals. Despite some of the lumps we took on the mat, I’m encouraged by the positivity and the resilience of the team – varsity and JV alike.”

Against Independence, the Wildcats got off to a tough start as they got down 19-0 and 31-12, before they were able to make it a little closer. Louisburg got wins from Jay McCaskill (145), Jesse Murphy (152), Lucas Swartz (160), Brayden Yoder (182), Aiden Barker (195) and Kyle Oram (220).

“Their lighter weights were pretty solid and they had a lot of experienced young guys on their roster,” Bovaird said. “The Independence dual could have gone either way. Kaven (Bartlett) lost a close one against the same kid who beat him at sub-state last year. Last year it was 1-0, this time it was 3-2. He’s making big strides already.

“Elijah (Eslinger) got caught by a physical attack and then lost his balance for a split second, and that’s what cost him. Next time he sees that wrestler, it’ll be a different story. We had big wins from McCaskill, Murphy, Swartz, Yoder, and Oram. Murphy has the most high school wrestling experience of all of them, and he just started in eighth grade.”

The Wildcats came back strong against Gardner as they got wins from Noah Cotter (106), Colton Blue (113), Bartlett (126), J’Lee Collins (132), McCaskill, Murphy, Ashton Moore (170), Yoder and Barker.

Against Baldwin, the dual could have gone either way. Louisburg was down 33-25 with three wrestlers left.

Barker and Elijah Eslinger (285) each got a pin, but Oram was pinned at 220 which gave the Bulldogs the slight edge. Cotter, Blue, Bartlett, Traden Noll (138) and Moore also got victories for Louisburg.

“We had a tough night, losing two close duals that could have done either way,” Bovaird said. “I was hoping for different results, but there’s lots of silver linings to the night. We had winning records from Cotter, Blue, Bartlett, McCaskill, Murphy, Moore, and Yoder. Barker was undefeated on the night and is sitting at an 8-0 record so far. Collins got his first win of the season as well.”

Louisburg is back in action tonight as the Wildcats travel to Olathe West for a dual. They end the 2021 schedule with tournament action Saturday in Tonganoxie.

“We’ve got high standards for the program this year, so we’re taking our competitions very seriously,” Bovaird said. “The struggle is going to be keeping the team from dwelling on losses or mistakes. Big life lesson there – learn from the losses or they’re going to continue to impact your growth negatively. We need to be resilient and bounce back from the tough matches and work to improve every day.”