

# Bartlett wins 126-pound title at Husky Invitational



*Louisburg senior Kaven Bartlett went 4-0 last weekend at the Husky Invitational held at Blue Valley Northwest High School.*

OVERLAND PARK – For being a last minute addition to its schedule, the Louisburg wrestling team was more than happy to take part in the Husky Invitational last weekend.

However, maybe no one was more elated than Kaven Bartlett.

The Louisburg junior won the 126-pound title at the tournament held at Blue Valley Northwest High School. Over two days on Friday and Saturday, Bartlett proved the best in his class as he put together a 4-0 record, including a victory over a state-ranked wrestler.

Bartlett opened with a first period pin of Topeka-Seaman's Draven Bennett, then followed it up with another pin of Heritage's Diego Reyes.

He then squared off with Lawrence Free State's D'onte Goodman, who is ranked No. 5 in Class 6A, in the semifinals. Bartlett responded with a 6-1 decision and then downed Andover's Colter Rieschick by a 4-1 decision in the championship match.

"Kaven was a man on a mission at BVNW," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "In his semifinal match, he faced a Lawrence Free State wrestler who is ranked #5 in 6A, and Kaven was all about business with him. He got two takedowns and was dominant

on top. In the finals, he kept his focus and never let the spotlight of being a major tournament distract him.”

In all, the Wildcats finished 11th out of 22 teams with 153 points. Andover won the tournament with 321.5 points, while Maize was second with 299.

The Wildcats weren’t even supposed to be in the tournament as they were originally scheduled to compete in Parsons on Friday. It ended up being cancelled due to COVID-19, the Wildcats’ second cancellation in as many weeks.

Bovaird said his team was fortunate to compete in the Husky Invitational and learned a lot from their time there.

“We were the only 4A school there and we were the smallest Kansas school (aside from Jayhawk-Linn, which is 3A),” Bovaird said. “The rest of the 22-team field was filled with 5A and 6A schools, as well as two Colorado teams (JK Mullen out of Denver and Heritage out of Littleton), one Iowa team (Marion), and one Missouri team (Lincoln Prep). I loved seeing the competition there.

“The Husky Invitational had a good number of state-ranked kids and returning state medalists. When we see the same faces all season long, it gets to be monotonous. Tournaments like this one help us see new styles and new faces – especially when it’s against kids we know nothing about – and it’s a great measuring stick for where we are now versus where we want to be.



***Louisburg senior Aiden Barker finished fifth at Husky Invitational at 195 pounds.***

Bartlett wasn't the only Wildcat to earn a spot on the medal stand. Senior Aiden Barker competed in a tough 195-pound field and took fifth overall.

Barker finished 3-2 on the day and pinned Blue Valley West's Robert Svoboda in his fifth place match. Barker lost his semifinal and consolation semifinals to Matthew Marcum of Lawrence Free State (No. 2 in 6A) and Topeka Seaman's Jaxson Thomas.

Sophomore Colton Blue went on to finish seventh at 113 pounds, while freshman Ashton Moore was eighth at 170 pounds. Mika McKitrick (120) and J'Lee Collins (132) each took 10th, while Noah Cotter was 11th at 106, as was Brayden Yoder at 182.

"One of the tough things about wrestling is when you have a

kid with high hopes for a tournament and he goes out and falls short of his goals,” Bovaird said. “The trick is how to get him to refocus and bounce back – not just after making a mistake in a match or after losing a match, but the next week at practice. Wrestling can be so draining psychologically. The trick is that the coaches need to help these kids realize that a single match or tournament isn’t a defining moment in their season; it’s just a snapshot in time. We have time to fix our mistakes, and at this point in the year, we need to be making mistakes. That’s the only way we can learn and best prepare for the postseason. ‘Beat Yesterday’ is the corporate motto of Garmin, and that’s exactly what our coaching staff has been trying to get our kids to believe.

“We’re a young team, and that puts us at a disadvantage in a lot of ways. But the great things about the BVNW tournament outnumber the negatives. Aiden Barker matched up with the #2 ranked wrestler in 6A and was the only opponent that wasn’t pinned by him. Aiden bounced back and finished 5th. Mika won his first two varsity matches of the season, Colton finished 7th at 113 in a very tough bracket, J’Lee scored a ton of takedowns and is showing huge progress despite his record, and Lucas Swartz, Ashton, and Brayden continue to be competitive as freshmen in the upper weights. We’re still seeing some great things from Noah, Kyle Oram, and Elijah Eslinger as well.”

Louisburg is back in action Thursday when it hosts Ottawa in a dual format and then will take part in the Baldwin Invitational Tournament on Saturday.

## **Wildcats take down Lawrence in home dual**

Louisburg hosted Lawrence High School for a dual last Wednesday and the Wildcats came out on top 51-27.

The dual, which started at 220 pounds, was big for the Wildcats early as a pin by Noah Cotter, at 106 pounds, along with two forfeits, put Louisburg up 18-6.



***Louisburg sophomore Noah Cotter works for a pin last week at home during his 106-pound match against Lawrence.***

Mika McKitrick won by forfeit at 120 pounds, and after a Kaven Bartlett loss, J'Lee Collins won by pin to put the Wildcats up 30-9.

Despite a Jesse Murphy pin at 152 pounds, Lawrence chipped away at the Wildcat lead and cut it to 36-27 heading into the final three matches.

However, Ashton Moore and Brayden Yoder each won by forfeit and Aiden Barker ended it with a 4-1 decision.