

Wildcats medal six at Frontier League meet



Louisburg senior Aiden Barker works for a pin last Wednesday during the league meet at Eudora High School. Barker finished second at 195 pounds.

EUDORA –The first postseason test for the Louisburg wrestling team came last Wednesday as the Wildcats competed in the Frontier League Tournament.

Louisburg more than made its mark as six Wildcats earned league medals – four of which made the finals at Eudora High School.

Colton Blue (113 pounds), Ashton Moore (170), Brandon Doles (182), Aiden Barker (195) each made the finals and all finished second at league. Kaven Bartlett (126) was third and Elijah Eslinger (285) took fourth.

As a team, the Wildcats were sixth overall with 134 points. Tonganoxie won the league title with 197 points and Paola was second with 176.

“In all honesty, I wanted to finish higher as a team,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “I wanted to have multiple league champs, and I wanted to win several of those matches that were either rematches from previous meets or regional match-ups we’d need to win. It was a bitter-sweet night because we didn’t have any league champs, and we lost several of those key matches. But at the same time, we had several

matches that we battled from start to finish. We may not have won them, but I'm so proud of the fight we gave.

"The Frontier League has been getting tougher and tougher every year I've been here. This year alone, we've got 17 state-ranked wrestlers in our league and 11 who have been ranked previously in the year. We've got 27 returning state / substate qualifiers as well. The Frontier League is awesome competition – just what we need to take our final strides of improvement to regionals."

Barker, who is ranked No. 3 at 195 pounds in Class 4A, squared off with Spring Hill's Draven Pipkin (No. 4 in 5A) and fell in a 10-5 decision in the championship match. Prior to that, Barker had two pins, including one of Tonganoxie's Wyatt Harris in the semifinals.



Louisburg senior Brandon Doles gets some back points last week

at Eudora.

As for Doles, he defeated Bonner Springs' Dakota Mortell by a 10-0 major decision in the semifinals and then met Baldwin's Jack Harvey in the finals. Harvey, who is a state-ranked wrestler himself, pinned Doles in the first period.

In his first league tournament, Blue had a big day at 113 pounds as he won by major decision in his first match and then pinned Spring Hill's James Sheldon to reach the finals.

Blue then went up against fellow freshman Xander Meinig of Paola. In what was a back-and-forth match, Meinig defeated Blue by a 13-9 decision in what could have gone either way.



Louisburg freshman Colton Blue finished second at 113 pounds last week during the league meet in Eudora.

Moore, who also participated in his first league tourney, earned a pin in his first match and then defeated Piper's Sawyer Vas, 3-0, in the semifinals. He then faced Tyler Pankey, who is ranked No. 4 in 4A, and was pinned in the first period.

"Everyone had pretty legit opponents in the finals," Bovaird said. "Blue lost 9-13 to a Paola kid who's ranked 6th at state, Moore lost by pin to the 4th ranked kid from Tonganoxie, Doles lost by pin to the #3 ranked kid from Baldwin, and Barker lost 5-10 to the #4 ranked kid in 5A from Spring Hill. Bartlett lost 5-3 to the #3 ranked kid from Paola in the semifinals as well.

"That's just how it is – the league is tough as nails, and you've got to credit the other programs for elevating our league to that level. It's good all-around – we battle each other at league and get each other ready for regionals and state."



Louisburg freshman Ashton Moore was second at 170 pounds at the Frontier League meet.

Bartlett squared off with Paola's Ryan Pankov in the

semifinals at 126 pounds and lost a close 5-3 decision. The Louisburg junior bounced back as he pinned Piper's Payton Mills in the consolation semifinals, before pinning Ottawa's Trevor Kaub for third overall.

Eslinger, the team's heavyweight, recorded a pair of pins on the day, but lost his third place match to Piper's Chris Craig in a tough 4-3 decision to take fourth overall.

Sophomore Noah Cotter (106) took fifth overall, while freshman Mika McKitrick (120) and freshman Lucas Swartz (160) finished sixth. Sophomore J'Lee Collins (132) and freshman Jay McCaskill (138) were seventh and senior Aidan Cannon (145) took eighth.