

Wildcats hope experience keys another postseason run



Louisburg senior Kolby Kattau (25) is one of several returning players for the Wildcat baseball team this season after they found themselves in the regional championship a year ago.

The Louisburg baseball team found itself one win away from the state tournament a year ago and that loss has only left the Wildcats wanting more.

After falling to Topeka-Hayden in the regional championship game, the Wildcats have been itching to get back on the field and many of those same pieces are returning to try for another postseason run.

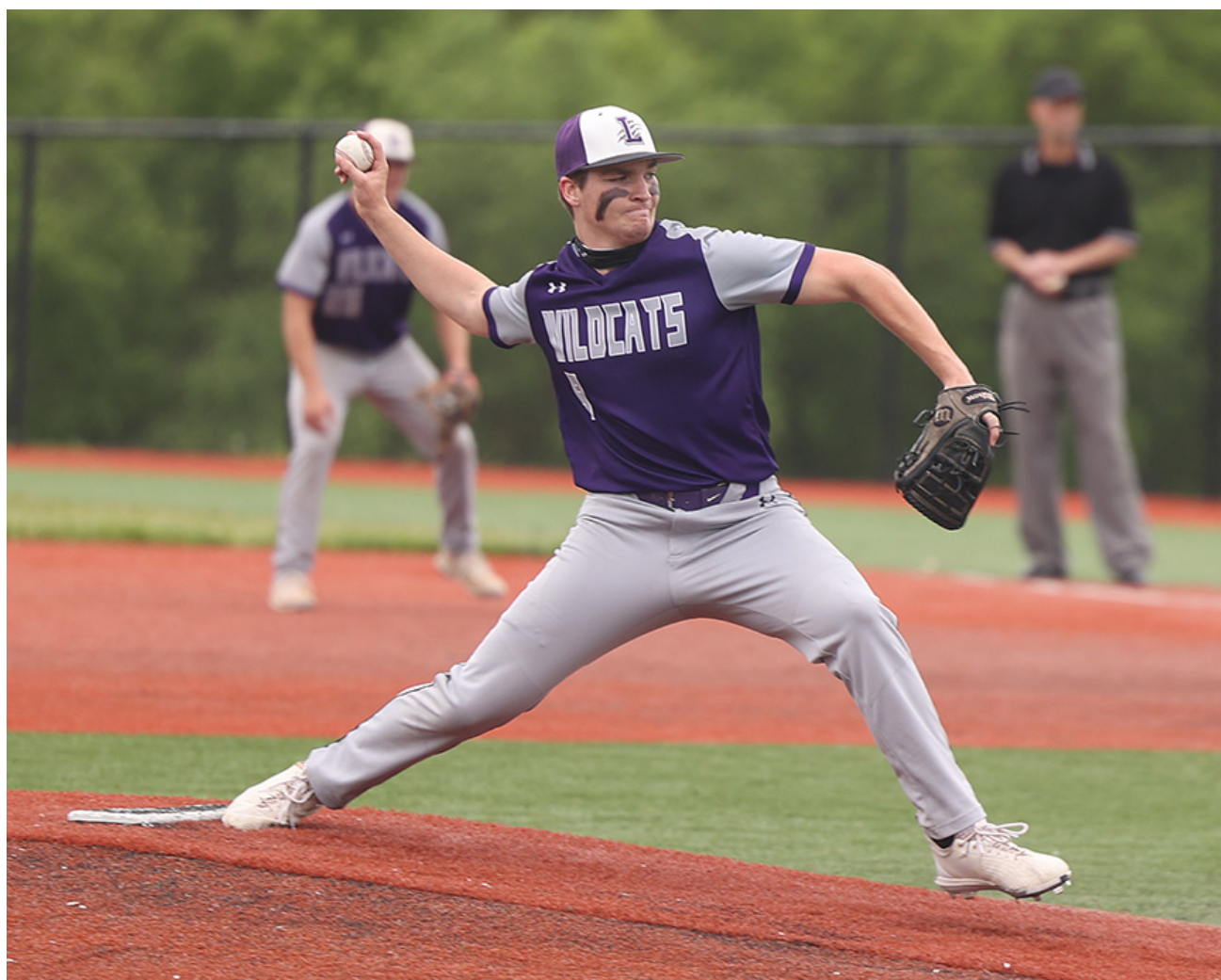
“Getting to that regional championship last year really got everyone excited to make it a step farther this season,” Louisburg coach Kade Larson said. “We only lost three seniors last year so we have some great experience coming back. That helps a lot with staying motivated to get to state this year.”

Louisburg returns six players that saw significant innings a year ago and four of them were All-Frontier League players a year ago.

The Wildcats will be led by senior Kolby Kattau, who was a first-team all-league player at first base. He was also an honorable mention all-state player by the Kansas Association of Baseball Coaches.

Kattau finished the year with a .444 average and racked up 32 hits for the Wildcats to go along with a .560 on-base percentage. He finished with five doubles, two triples, 16 RBIs, scored 26 runs and stole nine bases.

The Louisburg senior is also a member of pitching staff that returns many of its arms from a year ago. Kattau, along with seniors Brandon Doles, Maverick Rockers, Sam Hastings and junior Mack Newell, will all see a lot of time on the mound this season.



Louisburg senior Brandon Doles returns to help lead the Wildcat pitching staff this season.

“This veteran feel should help a lot as they have all dealt with a full season and postseason games,” Larson said. “I think that will only help us going into this year. A great thing about returning a lot of guys is that we also have a

good deal of pitching coming back. Doles, Kattau, Rockers, Hastings and Newell will all be guys that return on the mound for us this year. Having a lot of pitching returning helps a ton."

The Wildcats also have an experienced defense coming back as Doles was a second team all-league player in left field last season and an honorable mention pitcher. Rockers (shortstop) and junior Cade Driskell (third base) were honorable mention selections a year ago.

At the plate, Doles had a .420 average to go along with a home run, five doubles and 23 RBIs. As a pitcher, he had a 4-3 record in 37.2 innings pitched and had a 3.15 earned run average. He also struck out 21, compared to just 10 walks.

As for Rockers, he had a .293 average, but he also had 22 hits with two doubles, two triples, two home runs, 14 RBIs and 23 runs. Driskell, in his first year on varsity, hit .327 with 18 hits, two doubles, 11 RBIs and scored 14 runs.



Louisburg senior Maverick Rockers will be the team's starting shortstop this season, along with one of the Wildcats' starting pitchers.

Louisburg also returns senior second baseman George Reichart, who started for the Wildcats a year ago. Sophomore Brody McGreer could also see time at second this year.

Junior Corbin Hamman will see time at shortstop and third base, depending on the pitching matchups, while Driskell play at either first or third.

The Wildcats have a pair of newcomers behind the plate in junior Parker Hufferd and sophomore Jackson Howard.

In the outfield, the Wildcats will return Doles, sophomore Declan Battle, Newell, junior Jackson Kush and Hastings, who all saw some varsity time a year ago.

With all the experience, Larson believes this team has a

chance to be a good one offensively as well.

"You can't coach/teach experience and having guys with it will help us a lot this season," Larson said. "I definitely think we have the ability to put up runs this season. We have some speed that can help us as well as we have some guys that can hit for power. Our approach to every game will be to make the routine plays and that will always give us a chance to win it at the end."

Louisburg will try for that first win today as the Wildcats host Baldwin in a doubleheader at Lewis-Young Park. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.