

# Wildcats win second straight tourney title to begin new year



*The Louisburg High School wrestling team won the Topeka High Invitational on Saturday as the Wildcats edged Council Grove for the title.*

TOPEKA – Since coming back from the holiday break, all the Louisburg wrestling team has done is win.

The Wildcats continued that Saturday as they competed at the Topeka Invitational. Louisburg captured its second straight tournament victory as the Wildcats scored 156 points and edged out Council Grove by three points to leave with some hardware.

Louisburg also did it short-handed as one of their wrestlers was out with an illness and the Wildcats weren't able to field a full roster.

“It felt great to win the team title, especially considering the fact that we were without a big point scorer at 157,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Jay McCaskill was sick and unable to compete. I think there were a few matches that were pretty winnable that we needed to go our way, but ultimately, they were great learning opportunities.”

The Wildcats also left Topeka with a pair of champions. Seniors Kaven Bartlett (138 pounds) and Trace Eslinger (215) won their respective weight classes and were two of seven

Wildcats to earn top 3 finishes.

Bartlett won the 138-pound crown with a pin of Topeka West's Maxwell Cook in the semifinals and then earned a first period pin of Council Grove's Caden Honer in the finals. Bartlett improved his record to 21-0 on the season is currently ranked No. 3 in Class 4A.

Eslinger captured his first tournament title of the season at 215 pounds. The Louisburg senior pinned KC Washington's JohVonte Ross in the third period of his semifinal match and then earned a 7-2 decision over Council Grove's Tyler Hutchinson in the finals.

"Trace is regularly weighing in at 190 or 188, and he's giving up a lot of weight in his matches at 215," Bovaird said. "He's been a warrior this season, never complaining and always giving his best efforts. Definitely very proud of how he wrestled Saturday."

Sophomores Will Showalter (106 pounds), Mika McKitrick (132), Brayden Yoder (190) and junior Elias Pugh (175) also earned a spot in the championship match and all four finished with runner-up honors.

Yoder faced a ranked-opponent in his championship match. He squared off with Council Grove's Ace Monihen, who is currently ranked No. 2 in the state in Class 3-2-1A. Yoder battled, but came up just short in a 4-0 decision to take second.

Senior Jesse Murphy (144), junior J'Lee Collins (126) and senior Elijah Eslinger (285) each finished third, while freshman Keegan Rogers (120) took fourth.

"That was one of the reasons why we'd kept this tournament on our schedule the last few years," Bovaird said. "It gives our younger guys a chance to boost confidence, and the month of January is a grind for wrestlers. The next two tournaments are tough ones, and then we start our championship series of

League, Regionals, and State.

“Will Showalter was so close to winning his first championship at 106, losing in the final seconds on a takedown and nearfall. He wrestled great all weekend. Mika McKitrick and Elias Pugh both made the finals for the first time of their career. Both of them wrestled with confidence and focus. Elijah Eslinger, Jesse Murphy, and J’Lee Collins all bounced back from disappointing losses to finish third in their weights. I thought they showed great leadership by being resilient and refocusing. Brayden wrestled a very tough match in the finals to a Council Grove wrestler who’s ranked No. 2 in 321A and No. 7 in all classes.”

The schedule starts to heat up for the Wildcats this week and it all starts today as they host Labette County and Olathe South for a double dual. Action begins at 6 p.m. at Louisburg High School.

Louisburg will then follow it up with another dual Wednesday at Lawrence High School, before competing at the two-day tournament Friday and Saturday at Blue Valley Northwest.

“This is the kind of test we need, and it’s great to help break up the monotony of January,” Bovaird said. “We have three duals and a big tournament. Should be lots of great matches for our guys. The first two weeks of January gave us some great encouragement and motivation, and now it’s time to put it to the test against some of the best wrestlers in the area.”

## **106**

Will Showalter (9-12) placed 2nd and scored 18.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Will Showalter (Louisburg Boys) 9-12 won by fall over Aidan Oldham (Gardner-Edgerton Boys) 5-11 (Fall 3:24)

- Semifinal – Will Showalter (Louisburg Boys) 9-12 won by fall over Maverick Hug (Holton) 15-9 (Fall 1:00)
- 1st Place Match – Scotty Leandro (Burlingame) 14-6 won by decision over Will Showalter (Louisburg Boys) 9-12 (Dec 12-10)

## 113

Broden Vargo (1-9) place is unknown and scored 0.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Cesar Sandoval (Holton) 11-9 won by fall over Broden Vargo (Louisburg Boys) 1-9 (Fall 2:45)
- Cons. Round 1 – Broden Vargo (Louisburg Boys) 1-9 received a bye ( ) (Bye)
- Cons. Semi – Elijah Phelps (Topeka West Boys) 3-6 won by fall over Broden Vargo (Louisburg Boys) 1-9 (Fall 5:52)

## 120

Keegan Rogers (5-14) placed 4th and scored 11.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Keegan Rogers (Louisburg Boys) 5-14 won by fall over Gavyn Chovanec (Gardner-Edgerton Boys) 2-10 (Fall 1:48)
- Semifinal – Lucas Baetz (Holton) 16-5 won by fall over Keegan Rogers (Louisburg Boys) 5-14 (Fall 0:34)
- Cons. Semi – Keegan Rogers (Louisburg Boys) 5-14 won by fall over Seth Quaney (Burlingame) 3-14 (Fall 4:40)
- 3rd Place Match – Tyree English (Topeka High Boys) 11-8 won by fall over Keegan Rogers (Louisburg Boys) 5-14 (Fall 2:26)

## 126

J`Lee Collins (11-8) placed 3rd and scored 11.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Sean Morrissey (Holton) 5-5 won by decision over J`Lee Collins (Louisburg Boys) 11-8 (Dec 7-6)
- Cons. Round 1 – J`Lee Collins (Louisburg Boys) 11-8 received a bye ( ) (Bye)
- Cons. Semi – J`Lee Collins (Louisburg Boys) 11-8 won by fall over Ethan Lif (Council Grove Boys) 8-6 (Fall 1:16)
- 3rd Place Match – J`Lee Collins (Louisburg Boys) 11-8 won by decision over Sean Morrissey (Holton) 5-5 (Dec 15-10)

## 132

Mika McKitrick (6-12) placed 2nd and scored 18.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Mika McKitrick (Louisburg Boys) 6-12 won by fall over Jordan Stiner (Topeka High Boys) 8-9 (Fall 2:23)
- Semifinal – Mika McKitrick (Louisburg Boys) 6-12 won by fall over Caleb Sullivan (Gardner-Edgerton Boys) 12-12 (Fall 3:16)
- 1st Place Match – Michael Weatherly (Topeka West Boys) 17-9 won by fall over Mika McKitrick (Louisburg Boys) 6-12 (Fall 0:41)

## 138

Kaven Bartlett (21-0) placed 1st and scored 22.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg Boys) 21-0

received a bye () (Bye)

- Semifinal – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg Boys) 21-0 won by fall over Maxwell Cook (Topeka West Boys) 5-7 (Fall 1:22)
- 1st Place Match – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg Boys) 21-0 won by fall over Caden Honer (Council Grove Boys) 7-3 (Fall 1:28)

## 144

Jesse Murphy (16-7) placed 3rd and scored 12.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg Boys) 16-7 received a bye () (Bye)
- Semifinal – Hadley Smith (Council Grove Boys) 17-6 won by fall over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg Boys) 16-7 (Fall 3:27)
- Cons. Semi – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg Boys) 16-7 won by fall over Calvin Noonan (Burlingame) 5-7 (Fall 1:25)
- 3rd Place Match – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg Boys) 16-7 won by fall over Ethan Harralson (Gardner-Edgerton Boys) 9-11 (Fall 3:40)

## 150

Colin Robinson (1-11) place is unknown and scored 0.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Jace Goodman (Council Grove Boys) 18-3 won by fall over Colin Robinson (Louisburg Boys) 1-11 (Fall 1:09)
- Cons. Round 1 – Michael Cooper (Topeka West Boys) 6-20 won by fall over Colin Robinson (Louisburg Boys) 1-11 (Fall 4:33)

## 165

Vance Hahn (2-19) place is unknown and scored 0.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Joseph Cisneros (Gardner-Edgerton Boys) 5-2 won by fall over Vance Hahn (Louisburg Boys) 2-19 (Fall 2:54)
- Cons. Round 1 – Jacob Drone (Bishop Miege Boys) 9-12 won by fall over Vance Hahn (Louisburg Boys) 2-19 (Fall 2:41)

## 175

Elias Pugh (3-4) placed 2nd and scored 16.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Elias Pugh (Louisburg Boys) 3-4 received a bye ( ) (Bye)
- Semifinal – Elias Pugh (Louisburg Boys) 3-4 won by fall over Kaleb Moore (Gardner-Edgerton Boys) 3-1 (Fall 1:02)
- 1st Place Match – Cole Wilson (Council Grove Boys) 9-11 won by fall over Elias Pugh (Louisburg Boys) 3-4 (Fall 2:56)

## 190

Brayden Yoder (16-6) placed 2nd and scored 16.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg Boys) 16-6 received a bye ( ) (Bye)
- Semifinal – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg Boys) 16-6 won by fall over Korden Kinney (Burlingame) 8-11 (Fall 0:48)
- 1st Place Match – Ace Monihen (Council Grove Boys) 21-0 won by decision over Brayden Yoder (Louisburg Boys) 16-6 (Dec 4-0)

## 215

Trace Eslinger (15-5) placed 1st and scored 20.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg Boys) 15-5 received a bye ( ) (Bye)
- Semifinal – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg Boys) 15-5 won by fall over JohVonte Ross (KC Washington Boys) 7-8 (Fall 4:54)
- 1st Place Match – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg Boys) 15-5 won by decision over Tyler Hutchinson (Council Grove Boys) 15-8 (Dec 7-2)

## 285

Elijah Eslinger (20-3) placed 3rd and scored 12.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg Boys) 20-3 received a bye ( ) (Bye)
- Semifinal – Holden Ziegler (Council Grove Boys) 16-2 won by fall over Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg Boys) 20-3 (Fall 1:12)
- Cons. Semi – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg Boys) 20-3 won by fall over Bennett Vann (Gardner-Edgerton Boys) 4-2 (Fall 1:33)
- 3rd Place Match – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg Boys) 20-3 won by fall over Cooper Martin (Topeka High Boys) 17-13 (Fall 2:30)