

Wildcats win 3 duals in 2 days following latest victory at Lawrence



Louisburg sophomore Ashton Moore works for a pin Tuesday during the Wildcats' home dual against Olathe South. It was Moore's first match of the season after returning from injury.

In a week that features three duals and a two-day tournament, the Louisburg wrestling team is off to a strong start.

Louisburg hosted a double-dual Tuesday against Labette County and Olathe South and walked away with a pair of victories.

The Wildcats' winning ways continued Wednesday as they traveled to Lawrence High for a dual and left with a 43-33 victory.

"Overall, it's pretty nice to come away with three dual wins," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "We're going into our final dual of the season next week with an 8-5 record, and with the exception of a few times, we've had a full line-up the entire season. That's the great thing about how the program has grown. We're not only fielding a full line-up, but we're also able to get solid kids out there to fill in when a starter is out for illness or injury."

Louisburg opened Tuesday's action against Labette County and put together comfortable 53-25 victory over the Grizzlies. It was a little more uncomfortable for the Wildcats against

Olathe South.

The Wildcats were down double digits, but got pins in three of their last four matches to squeak out a 42-39 victory. With his team down by three going into the final match, senior heavyweight Elijah Eslinger recorded a pin to seal the win.



Louisburg senior Elijah Eslinger turns his opponent from Olathe South for a pin to clinch the dual win Tuesday at home.

“Definitely a roller-coaster of a dual,” Bovaird said. “There were some matches I thought could have gone our way, but those matches were lost because of mistakes that we can easily fix. There’s no sense in getting upset about it, as long as we’re learning every chance we get on the mat. With the youth of our team this year, that’s the important thing – learning as we go. I can get upset at kids making mistakes or I can step up and be a mentor and help them grow from it. These kids don’t need an angry coach yelling from matside, so our coaching staff will continue to work to help them make improvements.

“Two of our duals came down to Elijah’s matches – if he won or lost, that determined the final result for the team. That’s a lot of pressure, and Elijah was a stoic warrior about it. I’m very proud of him for having that sort of courage, fortitude,

and focus.”

Louisburg also saw the return of sophomore Ashton Moore, who made his varsity debut at home Tuesday. Moore, who wrestles at 175 pounds, is a returning state qualifier and was cleared after suffering an injury during football season.

Moore picked up right where he left off last season as he earned a 3-0 record in the three duals, which included two pins.



Louisburg sophomore Brayden Yoder won three matches – all by pin – against Labette County, Olathe South and Lawrence.

“It was great having Ashton back on the mat,” Bovaird said. “He’s been itching to get back after it all season, and he made sure to get out there and get his job done. Condition-wise, he really didn’t look too bad. He’s been working out on his own to stay strong and in shape, but there’s really only one way to get into wrestling shape, and that’s by wrestling.”

“He’s shown a great amount of mental discipline with how he carried himself this week. I think it’s a matter of time before his name starts creeping into the state rankings, and I think he’s poised to bounce back for a great sophomore

season.”

Against Lawrence on Wednesday, senior Kaven Bartlett put his undefeated record on the line against Lawrence’s Trevon Swearinger, who is currently ranked No. 6 in 6A.

Bartlett dominated his match at 138 pounds as he won by major decision and improved to 24-0 on the year. He is currently the No. 4 wrestler in Class 4A.

“It was a great match in which Kaven maintained control almost the whole time,” Bovaird said. “He got some great takedowns and was dominant on top. It looked like he might get the pin a couple of times, but his opponent was a pretty strong and athletic kid and was able to fight off his back.”



Freshman Keegan Rogers went 2-1 in the three duals at 120 pounds.

Freshman Keegan Rogers, Bartlett, junior Colin Robinson, senior Kaleb Carter, sophomore Jay McCaskill, Moore, sophomore Brayden Yoder and Eslinger all earned wins against Lawrence.

Eslinger, Yoder, Moore, Bartlett, Carter and McCaskill were

all undefeated in the three duals, while junior J'Lee Collins, Rogers and Robinson were 2-1.

The Wildcats will get back on the mats this Friday for the 2-day Blue Valley Northwest Invitational. Matches are slated to begin at 4 p.m.

"This will be the toughest tournament of the season so far, and I'm excited to see how we fare against all of these bigger schools, as well as some out-of-state competition," Bovaird said. "Every weight class has multiple state-ranked kids from 6A down through 321A. It'll be a great measuring stick for where we're at right now, as well as what we need to be focusing on to get ready for the end of the season."