

Eslinger wins title as Wildcats medal four at Baldwin



Louisburg senior Elijah Eslinger works for a pin Saturday during his 285-pound match at the Baldwin Invitational Touranment. Eslinger won his weight class with three pins.

BALDWIN CITY – Louisburg heavyweight Elijah Eslinger has experienced his fair share of success so far this season.

The one thing that has escaped him has been a tournament championship. Eslinger, a returning state medalist, checked that off his list Saturday.

The Wildcat senior won the 285-pound weight class in dominating fashion at the Baldwin Invitational Tournament. Eslinger, who is currently ranked No. 6 in Class 4A, won all four of his matches in under two minutes, which included three pins.

“It dawned on me earlier this month that Elijah has yet to win a varsity tournament, and I wanted to see what we could do to help him with that,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “I’m so proud of him for getting out there and doing his job at Baldwin. Before his semifinals match, I pulled him aside and told him that he needs to focus on the task at hand – on the present moment – and go out with controlled aggression, focus, and determination. That’s exactly what he did, too.

“He was on pace to have 4 pins in 4 matches, but in the finals his opponent ended up injury defaulting. Judging by how Elijah was wrestling that day, that match was looking to end in a pin as well.”

Eslinger also helped the Wildcat team to strong showing that led to four individual medals and an eighth place team finish. Louisburg finished with 93 points, while Tonganoxie won the 18-team tournament with 258. Wamego was second with 163.5



Louisburg head coach Bobby Bovaird talks with senior Kaven Bartlett on Saturday during an injury timeout at Baldwin.

Despite being down two starters due to illness and injury, Bovaird was happy with his team’s performance.

“The great thing was that we finished in eighth place, the same spot as last year, and we also had two starters out,” Bovaird said. “J’Lee Collins has been sick and Jay McCaskill is recovering from a knee injury. Team-wise, had we been at full strength, we could have finished even higher. This is a tough tournament that consists of only 4A schools. It’s a great litmus test for how we might do against these teams in

the post-season, and there were a bunch of teams there that we don't normally see until regionals or state."

Along with Eslinger (32-5), three Wildcats found the medal stand. Senior Kaven Bartlett (138 pounds) and sophomore Ashton Moore (175) both finished third overall, while sophomore Brayden Yoder (190) medaled fourth.

Bartlett (30-3), who has been wrestling through an injury, finished his day with a 3-1 record, with his lone loss coming in the semifinals to Holton's Cale Hein in a 6-2 decision.

The Louisburg senior bounced back to record a 3-0 decision over Baldwin's Ethan Williams and then pinned Wamego's Austin Meyer in the third place match.

As for Moore, he was seconds away from finding a spot in the championship. In the semifinals, Moore (11-4) lost a tough overtime match to Perry-Lecompton's Christian Conklin by an 8-6 decision.

Moore then responded with a pin of Ottawa's Sam Clevenger and outlasted Eudora's Braedon Speer in the third place match for a 2-0 decision.



Louisburg sophomore Ashton Moore finished third at 175 pounds Saturday at Baldwin.

"Kaven is bouncing back from some injuries at Blue Valley Northwest, and Ashton is still getting back into wrestling shape," Bovaird said. "Kaven's semifinal loss against the Holton kid was a rematch from this tournament last year. It was a tough kid and he wrestled well against us, but I could tell that Kaven was in a lot of pain. He showed a great deal of toughness bouncing back from that match.

"Ashton lost in overtime to a senior with over 30 matches on the season. The loss of mat time from the first half of this season was definitely a factor in that loss, but that's the way things go. Ashton has the grit and work ethic to help push his wrestling skills to the point where he's able to win those matches at regionals and state."

Yoder found himself in the most difficult weight class in the tournament that featured four of the top six wrestlers in the state.

Yoder took on that challenge as he left with a medal and took fourth overall, which included a pin of Ottawa's Seth Ferguson, who was ranked No. 6 in the state.

He began the tournament with a 2-0 decision of Labette County's Cody Hambleton, before having to meet Baldwin's Jack Harvey, who is No. 1 in the state. Yoder was pinned, but came back to win his next two matches.

Yoder (27-10) pinned Tonganoxie's Rocco Gehring in his next match, before pinning Ferguson in the second period of the second round of consolation. He then faced Goodland's Maverick Spresser in the third place match and lost a close 3-2 decision to the No. 4-ranked wrestler in the state.

The Louisburg sophomore's performance earned him a No. 6 ranking in the latest Class 4A rankings.

“Brayden was talking to the coaching staff and mentioned the depth of his weight class earlier in the week, and my response was that it’s the perfect setting for him to come out of his shell,” Bovaird said. “The way he’s been wrestling lately, Brayden’s name needs to be in consideration with state rankings and tournament seedings. Four of the top-six wrestlers in the state were in that bracket, and Brayden beat one of them. I’m very excited for Brayden, but at the same time, no one who’s worked with that young man in the practice room should be surprised.”



Louisburg sophomore Will Showalter tries to put his opponent on his back Saturday during his 106-pound match at Baldwin.

Louisburg will take a week to rest up before getting back on the mats for the Frontier League Tournament on Feb. 8 at Bonner Springs High School. Matches begin at 3 p.m.

106

Will Showalter (12-21) placed 7th and scored 3.0 team points.

- Champ. Round 1 – Will Showalter (Louisburg) 12-21 received a bye () (Bye)
- Quarterfinal – Brodie Starcher (Tonganoxie) 11-14 won by tech fall over Will Showalter (Louisburg) 12-21 (TF-1.5 4:23 (15-0))
- Cons. Round 2 – Asher Englert (Baldwin) 13-12 won by decision over Will Showalter (Louisburg) 12-21 (Dec 6-2)
- Cons. Round 3 – Will Showalter (Louisburg) 12-21 received a bye () (Bye)
- 7th Place Match – Will Showalter (Louisburg) 12-21 won by decision over Maverick Hug (Holton) 16-11 (Dec 7-0)

120

Keegan Rogers (7-17) place is unknown and scored 0.0 team points.

- Champ. Round 1 – Dane Ogden (Osawatomie) 13-8 won by fall over Keegan Rogers (Louisburg) 7-17 (Fall 1:08)
- Cons. Round 1 – Braxton Chase (Baldwin) 2-5 won by decision over Keegan Rogers (Louisburg) 7-17 (Dec 6-5)

126

Greysen Dixon (2-6) place is unknown and scored 1.0 team points.

- Champ. Round 1 – Knox Karnowski (Wamego) 23-4 won by fall over Greysen Dixon (Louisburg) 2-6 (Fall 1:12)
- Cons. Round 1 – Greysen Dixon (Louisburg) 2-6 won in sudden victory – 1 over Ty Ketter (Goodland) 11-13 (SV-1 7-5)
- Cons. Round 2 – Noah Van Foeken (Eudora) 14-18 won by decision over Greysen Dixon (Louisburg) 2-6 (Dec 5-4)

132

Logan Henry (6-16) place is unknown and scored 0.0 team points.

- Champ. Round 1 – Parker Slayman (Osawatomie) 20-7 won by fall over Logan Henry (Louisburg) 6-16 (Fall 1:00)
- Cons. Round 1 – Quentin Pisano (Buhler) 7-15 won by fall over Logan Henry (Louisburg) 6-16 (Fall 0:32)

132

Mika McKitrick (9-17) place is unknown.

- Champ. Round 1 – Cason Wyrick (Lafayette County) 7-2 won by tech fall over Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) 9-17 (TF-1.5 2:18 (15-0))
- Cons. Round 1 – Brett Paramore (Perry-Lecompton) 16-15 won by decision over Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) 9-17 (Dec 6-3)

138

Kaven Bartlett (30-3) placed 3rd and scored 18.0 team points.

- Champ. Round 1 – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 30-3 received a bye () (Bye)
- Quarterfinal – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 30-3 won by fall over Grady Sumrall (Ottawa) 14-14 (Fall 3:30)
- Semifinal – Cale Hein (Holton) 24-9 won by decision over Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 30-3 (Dec 6-2)
- Cons. Round 3 – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 30-3 won by decision over Ethan Williams (Baldwin) 15-13 (Dec 3-0)
- 3rd Place Match – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 30-3 won by

fall over Austin Meyer (Wamego) 14-9 (Fall 2:21)

144

Jesse Murphy (18-13) place is unknown and scored 0.0 team points.

- Champ. Round 1 – Brian Llamas (Santa Fe Trail) 4-5 won by fall over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 18-13 (Fall 2:46)
- Cons. Round 1 – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 18-13 received a bye () (Bye)
- Cons. Round 2 – Tanner Templeton (Labette County) 14-11 won by fall over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 18-13 (Fall 1:52)

165

Vance Hahn (2-24) place is unknown and scored 0.0 team points.

- Champ. Round 1 – Thomas Romero (Eudora) 4-6 won by fall over Vance Hahn (Louisburg) 2-24 (Fall 0:45)
- Cons. Round 1 – Vance Hahn (Louisburg) 2-24 received a bye () (Bye)
- Cons. Round 2 – Nick Allen (Rock Creek) 8-12 won by fall over Vance Hahn (Louisburg) 2-24 (Fall 2:52)

175

Ashton Moore (11-4) placed 3rd and scored 18.0 team points.

- Champ. Round 1 – Ashton Moore (Louisburg) 11-4 received a bye () (Bye)
- Quarterfinal – Ashton Moore (Louisburg) 11-4 won by fall over Ricardo Jimenez (Baldwin) 13-13 (Fall 1:35)

- Semifinal – Christian Conklin (Perry-Lecompton) 24-7 won in overtime over Ashton Moore (Louisburg) 11-4 (OT 8-6)
- Cons. Round 3 – Ashton Moore (Louisburg) 11-4 won by fall over Sam Clevenger (Ottawa) 15-14 (Fall 4:42)
- 3rd Place Match – Ashton Moore (Louisburg) 11-4 won by decision over Braedon Speer (Eudora) 17-5 (Dec 2-0)

190

Brayden Yoder (27-10) placed 4th and scored 15.0 team points.

- Champ. Round 1 – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) 27-10 won by decision over Cody Hambleton (Labette County) 7-4 (Dec 2-0)
- Quarterfinal – Jack Harvey (Baldwin) 29-0 won by fall over Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) 27-10 (Fall 3:25)
- Cons. Round 2 – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) 27-10 won by fall over Rocco Gehring (Tonganoxie) 21-11 (Fall 2:32)
- Cons. Round 3 – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) 27-10 won by fall over Seth Ferguson (Ottawa) 25-9 (Fall 2:35)
- 3rd Place Match – Maverick Spresser (Goodland) 24-6 won by decision over Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) 27-10 (Dec 3-2)

215

Trace Eslinger (20-13) placed 8th and scored 8.0 team points.

- Champ. Round 1 – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 20-13 won by fall over Branden Gregory (Eudora) 2-18 (Fall 1:24)
- Quarterfinal – Hunter Benedict (Tonganoxie) 27-7 won by fall over Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 20-13 (Fall 3:19)
- Cons. Round 2 – Cooper Bittle (Rock Creek) 19-7 won by fall over Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 20-13 (Fall 1:20)
- Cons. Round 3 – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 20-13 won by

- fall over Cole Flory (Santa Fe Trail) 15-15 (Fall 0:59)
- 7th Place Match – Rhett Ihrig (Goodland) 19-10 won by fall over Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 20-13 (Fall 1:48)

285

Grant Strubbe (5-10) place is unknown.

- Champ. Round 1 – Gavin Rhoads (Tonganoxie) 15-13 won by fall over Grant Strubbe (Louisburg) 5-10 (Fall 1:05)
- Cons. Round 1 – Grant Strubbe (Louisburg) 5-10 won by fall over Kevin Whitten (Eudora) 8-13 (Fall 1:21)
- Cons. Round 2 – Grant Strubbe (Louisburg) 5-10 won by fall over John Goodwin (Prairie View) 4-13 (Fall 4:13)
- Cons. Round 3 – Alex Strother (Santa Fe Trail) 4-3 won by fall over Grant Strubbe (Louisburg) 5-10 (Fall 2:40)

285

Elijah Eslinger (32-5) placed 1st and scored 30.0 team points.

- Champ. Round 1 – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 32-5 won by fall over Blake Hamic (Wamego) 4-16 (Fall 1:08)
- Quarterfinal – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 32-5 won by fall over Hunter Diederich (Topeka-Hayden) 6-3 (Fall 1:15)
- Semifinal – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 32-5 won by fall over Jonathan Wren (Baldwin) 10-14 (Fall 1:15)
- 1st Place Match – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 32-5 won by injury default over Osiris Unruh (Jeff West) 20-6 (Inj. 1:13)