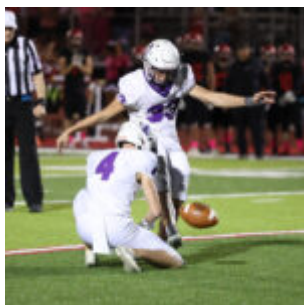


Ryals ready to kick his way onto the college football stage at Missouri S&T



Louisburg senior Layne Ryals signed his letter of intent earlier this month to play football at Missouri S&T this coming fall.

Kicking a football is nothing new to Layne Ryals. It is something he has done for most of his young life.

Ryals doesn't appear to stopping anytime soon, either.

During a signing ceremony on Feb.1, Ryals made it official in front of family and friends at Louisburg High School. Ryals signed his letter of intent to play football for Missouri S&T.

"It is a dream I have had since I started playing in the second grade," Ryals said of the opportunity to play college football. "It is really surreal and it has all happened really quickly."

The Louisburg senior was one of the top kickers – not only in the Frontier League – but in the state as well. Ryals earned all-league and all-state kicking honors following the Wildcats' season that ended with a Frontier League championship.

Ryals nailed 5 of 7 field goal attempts this past season, to go along with 38 of 39 extra point attempts. He made several

big kicks for the Wildcats throughout the year.

“Layne was a huge part of who we were over the last few years,” Louisburg football coach Drew Harding said. “Obviously, Layne was a really good specialist for us handling all kicking duties but he was also a really good defensive player for us. He was the brains of our defense a lot of times and we will definitely miss him in that aspect for sure.

“I’m very excited for Layne to kick at Missouri S&T. This is something he has worked hard at for a long time and I know he was interested in going there from the start.”



Louisburg senior Layne Ryals signed his letter of intent on Feb. 1 to play football at Missouri S&T. Sitting next Layne are his parents Jason Ryals and Janelle Ryals, along with his brother Grant, who videoed in. Standing (from left) is Louisburg assistant Joel McGhee, head coach Drew Harding, along with assistants Pete Skakal, Kade Larson, Jake Hinson and Ty Pfannenstiel.

Kicking is something Ryals has worked at for years, ever since he was out practicing in his front yard with a pretty special coach.

“When I first got into football, my mom (Janelle) was also

playing football at the time and she was the kicker for the team," Ryals said. "I grew up in a soccer family and it has always been something that I have practiced and worked at.

"We used to practice kickoffs in the front yard. When we first started when I was little, they would go about 10 yards. Obviously, it went a little further as I got older."

Ryals registered several touchbacks during the high school season and didn't give the opponent a chance to return kicks on a regular basis.

He hopes to do the same for Missouri S&T, a Division II program based out of Rolla, Mo.

"They said I had a good chance of playing as a freshman – kicking and punting," Ryals said "I definitely have to work at it because there is always going to be competition. I hope to be able to do something as freshman, whether it is just kickoffs, punting or just field goals. I know I need to put in a lot of work for that."

The Louisburg senior visited a few schools, and sent tapes to others in hopes of garnering interest following his junior season. He spent time attending camps, or just working on his own with his long snapper and holder – J.R. Rooney and Corbin Hamman.

All that led to an opportunity with Missouri S&T, which seemed to be the perfect fit for Ryals and his educational career.

"I want to use my football skills to help pay for a good education that I can use in my future," Ryals said. "I wasn't looking for anything crazy. I knew that engineering is what I wanted to do so I looked at about every D-1 and D-2 engineering school in the Midwest. Went to camps all summer and Missouri S&T was the one that showed the most interest in me and believed in me.

“S&T is one of the top engineering schools in the United States. The campus is beautiful and all the buildings are super advanced. The coaching staff is great and they had a pretty good season last year. They have a lot of good players coming up too so it should be fun.”