

Wildcat season comes to a close with regional loss to Bishop Miege



ROELAND PARK – The Louisburg boys soccer had the unenviable task of squaring off with the defending state champion, Bishop Miege, in the first round of the Class 4-1A regional tournament.

The difficulty level went up a couple notches as the two teams played the entire 80 minutes in a downpour Tuesday at Bishop Miege.

The Wildcat hopes of an upset was washed away early as the Stags poured on the goals en route to a 10-0 loss for Louisburg. Miege went on to win the regional title over Eudora on Thursday.

“The conditions were absolutely miserable, but we were in the same boat as the majority of the teams in the state,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Some teams played Monday night, but I’m glad we had the chance to get one more practice under our belts before we took on Miege. Tuesday’s weather definitely changed the way we played. We were soaking wet and

our cleats were heavier than usual. The ball wasn't moving the same, and with the wind sending the rain down in diagonal sheets, it made it tough to see the full field.

"We've been very fortunate this season with weather, and we just weren't prepared for how Tuesday's conditions would impact the game. Taking on the 7-time state champs was also a tough reality. For the third time in four years, we saw our season hopes dashed by Miego. That doesn't make it any easier. They were bigger, faster, and more experienced. No one wants to see their season ends to a team like Miego in conditions like what we had Tuesday night. It's got to be something we learn from, though. The guys have to remember how that game felt and use it as motivation in the off-season."

Both teams had trouble finding their footing in the first half, but the Stags still took a 3-0 lead at halftime.

Miego opened up the scoring in the second half with seven goals and Louisburg ended its season with a 4-13 record.

Although the record wasn't what the Wildcats were hoping for, Bovaird saw a lot of progress from a team that featured just three returning varsity players from the year before.

"The team we finished with in October was much different from the team we started with in August," he said. "Everyone made so many huge strides. The reality of things is that we began the season with two returning starters (Emmett White and Colton Blue) and one player with significant varsity time last year (Jacob Brown). A few others received some playing time in 2022, but not much. Essentially, our team this year was a group of kids with junior varsity experience. We were underdogs from the start, but we managed to do some outstanding things along the way. Our first game of the season saw a heroic comeback for a 3-2 victory. We held off Spring Hill to win 1-0 at home. We dominated our opponent at home for the Cancer Awareness Game. Several other games were winnable

for us – Independence (2-1), Pittsburg (2-0), Bonner Springs (2-1 in OT), Eudora (1-0), Ottawa (2-4), and Tonganoxie (1-0) were all games that could have gone either way, in my opinion.

“We had three freshmen with considerable varsity time, as well as a very solid bunch of sophomores. In goal, Evan Moreland went from a first-year player who split time on JV to having over 130 saves his sophomore year. Next year, we don’t have to reload and replace a bunch of graduating seniors. We have the chance to reflect on our season and make improvements for next year. We’ve had some special teams over the years, but something about this group gives me the feeling that the 2024 season will be just as special as any other.”