

# Hall of fame induction means a lot to Griffin, 2010 state football team



*Several members of the 2010 state football team returned last month as they were inducted into the school's hall of fame.*

The 2010-11 school year was a memorable one for Louisburg High School when it came to athletics.

The Wildcats won a pair of state titles that year – football and boys track and field – and it featured some of the better athletes the school had seen in some time.

Two of those pieces from that year were officially put into the Louisburg High School Athletic Hall of Fame last month.

Garrett Griffin, a 2012 graduate, was inducted along with the 2010 state football team. It was a special moment for everyone involved.

"It was great honor," Griffin said. "The special part for me was the 2010 team went in on the same night. I loved being a part of that team and it was great to see all those guys

honored as well. It was really nice to be back in Louisburg and to be able to catch up with guys. I am very thankful for my upbringing in Louisburg and it was more about the support group that I had growing up. My family, friends and coaches all helped me achieve everything I accomplished. I really can't thank all of them enough."

Griffin was a three-sport athlete for Louisburg High School and earned 12 varsity letters during his illustrious Wildcat career. Griffin holds several LHS football records, was a state champion in track and was a four-time letter winner in basketball. He was also a part of two state championship teams.

In football, Griffin was a 4-year letter winner and accumulated four team records during that span. He is the school's all-time career rushing leader with 4,667 yards, all-time receiving leader at 1,006 yards, all-time receptions leader with 51 and first in all-time tackles with 273.

Griffin earned All-Frontier League honors all four years and awarded all-state honors as a linebacker his junior season after helping lead the Wildcat football team to their first state title in 2010. In 2011, he was named among the Top 11 players in the state as a senior and was a Kansas Shrine Bowl selection



***Garrett Griffin, a 2012 graduate, was inducted into the school's hall of fame last month.***

In track and field, Griffin was a 4-time state qualifier in the javelin and 110-meter high hurdles. He was a two-time state champion in the javelin and a two-time state placer in the hurdles. He currently holds the school record in both events. As a junior, Griffin helped the Wildcats to their first state team title in 2011.

In basketball, Griffin was a 4-year letter winner and was an All-Frontier League selection his senior season.

"Track was always a great time and that is more of an individual than a team sport, but everyone was always there supporting each other," Griffin said. "Winning state in track and football in the same year was awesome. Cool thing about track was you get to compete with some guys that don't play football. Greg Darrington was my javelin coach and I owe a lot to him. He was like another dad to me during track season."

He was poised to have even more success in track as a senior. Griffin won three regional titles in 2012, but a ruptured appendix sidelined him for the state meet. It left him disappointed as was his father and coach, Gary Griffin.

“My senior year of track was not a negative memory for me. I remember waking up when I was in the recovery room at the hospital and heard my dad ask the doctor if I could still throw in the javelin and if it would make it worse. The doctor said I could, but that I wouldn’t like it too much.” Griffin joked. “I was peaking at the right time that year. Had my best day at regionals and I was lucky enough to throw a little in college.”

Following high school, Griffin signed with the Air Force Academy football program where he was a four-time letter winner as a tight end for the Falcons. During his time, he was also a member of the Air Force track and field program for two years and was a two-time Mountain West Conference placer in the javelin.

After graduating from the Academy, Griffin was selected as an undrafted free agent by the New Orleans Saints. He spent six seasons with the Saints and one with the Detroit Lions. As a member of the Saints, Griffin played in a handful of contests, which included an appearance in the NFC Championship game in 2018 where he caught a touchdown from quarterback Drew Brees.

Griffin spent last season with the Lions on the practice squad, but decided to retire from the NFL after six seasons. It was time to focus on his family.

“I got a few calls before the season, but I am ready to be done,” Griffin said. “It is bittersweet. I have loved football my whole life, but the last couple of years just wore on me. I am ready for some job security and little bit less stress. It was a great time in my life, but I have a family and it is time to move on and spend time with them. Playing in the NFL

gave me awesome experiences and my dream came true. I will always be grateful for that.”

The 2010 football team made school history as those Wildcats became the first to win a state championship in football. Louisburg defeated Holton, 24-16, in the Class 4A championship game in Salina to finish the season with a 14-0 record under head coach Gary Griffin.

Louisburg breezed through the regular season and district playoffs with wins over Eudora (33-6), Ottawa (35-0), St. James Academy (49-7), Silver Lake (21-3), De Soto (28-7), Baldwin (42-26), Spring Hill (35-6), Osawatomie (62-6) and Paola (21-3). Louisburg won every game by 18 points or more.

The Wildcats dominated their way through the Class 4A state playoffs with victories over Anderson County (42-20), Chanute (56-35) and De Soto (21-0). Louisburg squared off with rival Paola in the sub-state championship and the Wildcats downed the Panthers 28-7 to advance to the state game against Holton.

“It was very cool,” coach Griffin said. “I was surprised to see as many of those kids come back as they did. Alex (Gentges) was the one who tried to get the word out on social media and everything. I think we got close to 30 of them there and it was great to see them again.

“It brought back a lot of memories. It is amazing to me to see how much they have all changed in the last 13 years or so. I am still in contact with a lot of them, especially the ones Garrett is friends with. Several still live around here, but it was neat to see them all again.”

Louisburg found itself down 10-0 for the first time all season early in the state championship game, but the Wildcats scored 24 unanswered points to win the title.

“I remember everything about that game,” coach Griffin said. “In 2007 when we went to state, I didn’t think the better team

won. We could have played better against Andale. They had won it the year before and they kind of hit us in the mouth, got a lead, before we started to play better in the second half. Then when Holton got the lead on us, I just thought here we go again.

“Then late in the first half we put a drive together and scored. Our kids at halftime knew we were going to win because we figured out how to stop their offense. That was the third time I coached in a championship game and the other two we snatched defeat out of the jaws of victory. I didn’t want it to happen again.”

It was a talented squad that earned 22 spots on the All-Frontier League team, including eight first team selections. The Wildcats also had several all-state selections and were headlined by quarterback Kody Cook, running back/linebacker Garrett Griffin and linemen Tyler Ewy and Ross Dvorak, who each earned first-team honors.

Ewy was named as one of the Top 11 players in the state of Kansas by three different organizations and was the recipient of the Bobby Bell Award, which goes to the best small class defensive lineman in the Kansas City area. He was a fixture on the Wildcat defensive line as he led the team with 139 tackles, including 25 for a loss and 10 sacks.

Cook guided the offense all season as the team’s quarterback as he tallied more than 1,700 yards of total offense to go along with 19 touchdowns.

His teammate in the backfield was Griffin as he ran over opponents all season. Griffin led Louisburg with 1,594 yards rushing and 412 yards receiving to go along with a combined 27 touchdowns.

Along with Ewy, Dvorak was one of the leaders on the offensive and defensive lines and he was also third on the team with 89 tackles, nine for a loss and four sacks. He was a first-team

all-state selection by the Kansas Football Coaches Association (KFCA). Linebacker Chad Turney was a first team all-league selection and was second on the team with 126 stops.

Gary Griffin was named Coach of the Year by the KFCA.

"I know they had really lofty goals. Every year your goal is to win a state championship, but you could tell this group was really serious about it," coach Griffin said. "The year before we got beat by Miego and then they popped up to 5A. Once that happened, I knew that we had as good of a chance as anyone.

"We were good in 2009 and we only lost to Gardner and then Miego in the playoffs. But the following year, I think we only had Ross, Tyler and Garrett returning who played a lot of varsity time. The rest of those guys were JV. Kody was hurt his junior year, but we knew he was going to be good. We were building around four kids and everyone else just filled their roles perfectly. As the year went on, we started to build momentum and realized we were pretty good."

Members of the state championship team are Nate Goodwin, Nate O'Brien, Chris Chase, David Embers, Bradey Drew, Kody Cook, Hayden Guetterman, Jacob Powell, Ben Powers, Derek Mathis, Dylan York, Wyatt Sander, Nate Daugherty, Jordan Powell, Christian Richards, Christian Huffman, Nick Chapman, Will Garza, Alex Gentges, AJ Hildreth, Brett Hebert, Ryan Tinder, D.J. Meyer, Daniel O'Connor, Garrett Griffin, Clark Gregory, Luke Hupp, Curtis Lemke, Greyson Honsinger, Dakota Stone, Colton Seely, Alex Bell, Konnor Cook, Jason Danciak, Matt Nolte, Taylor Caskey, Matt Jenkins, Kyle McLellan, Chad Turney, Tyler Ewy, Colin Bird, Drew Carder, T.J. McKiearnan, Cole Kessler, Alex Cook, Ross Dvorak, Wayne Carlson, Ben Adams, Jacob Berglund, Mason Whaley, Doug Weers, Colton Rommel, David Stuteville, Dain Glenn, Kurtis Morgan, Austin Caskey and Kade Larson.

The Wildcats were led by head coach Gary Griffin and assistant

coaches Wayne Whiting, Larry Aylor, Jeff Lohse, Kyle Littrell, Billy Neff and Greg Darrington.

Team trainers were Ali Dover, Brook Frazier and Mike Cardwell. Head athletic trainer was Dr. Damon Dennis.