

Wildcats finish runner-up in season opener at Fort Scott



The Louisburg wrestling team finished second at the Fort Scott Dual Tournament last Friday as it posted a 4-1 record on the day.

FORT SCOTT – The Louisburg wrestling team had the showing it was hoping for Friday at the Fort Scott Dual Tournament.

Louisburg won its first four duals of the event, before falling to state-ranked Atchison County in the final one to finish as the tournament runner-up.

“It’s always nice to bring home some hardware from a tournament, especially when it’s a team plaque,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “The guys wrestled tough Friday night. Our one loss was against Effingham-Atchison County, and they’re ranked No. 5 in 321A as a team. We had some very gutsy individual wins, and that helped us hold off for wins against Blue Valley Southwest and Fort Scott.”

The Wildcats cruised to a 60-22 victory over Jayhawk-Linn to start the day and then followed it up with a 78-6 win over Anderson County. The matches got a little tougher after that.

Louisburg held on for a 39-34 victory over a talented Fort Scott program and then pulled out a 36-34 dual win over Blue Valley Southwest despite losing its final four matches.

Against Atchison County, Louisburg came up short with a 51-27 loss to the Tigers and finished the day with a 4-1 record.

The Wildcats also had to face a little adversity. Senior Colin Robinson, who wrestled at 150 pounds, suffered a broke nose early on, and Bovaird had to reshuffle his lineup.

Sophomore Tyson Blancarte, junior Mike McKittrick and senior Traden Noll all bumped up a weight class to make sure the Wildcats had a full lineup. It ended up being a big part of the Wildcats' runner-up finish.

Junior Canaan Clayton led the Wildcats with a 5-0 record at 113 pounds, which included three pins. Junior Ashton Moore finished the day with a 4-1 record with three pins at 190 pounds, while freshman Levi Cotter was 4-1 with a pin at 106 pounds.

Junior Jay McCaskill found himself in a loaded weight class at 157 pounds and came out with a 3-2 record, all of his wins coming by pin. One of those pins came against Anderson County's Masten Wright, who is ranked in the top five in state.

Freshman Bryce Thompson and sophomore Vance Hahn combined for a 5-1 record at 165 pounds and each had two pins.

Senior Elias Pugh (175 pounds), junior Brayden Yoder (215) and junior Will Showalter (120) each had 3-2 marks. Senior J'Lee Collins (132), freshman Spencer Mattison (126), junior Logan Henry (132/138) and junior Xander Lucas (285) each had a pair of wins.

"We're fortunate this year to have Canaan join the team," Bovaird said. "Coach (Shawn) Crossley and I have coached

Canaan since he was in elementary school, but since he's been homeschooled all that time, we've never had the chance to have him on the high school team. This year with KSHSAA's rules modifications, he's now able to be on the team, and he had a great day.

"Levi and Ashton both went 4-1 and wrestled really tough. Jay was in a beast of a weight with 4 state-ranked wrestlers. He lost tough matches to Fort Scott and Effingham, but was able to pin a ranked kid from Anderson County."

With all the success the Wildcats experienced at Fort Scott, Bovaird is hoping that it will bleed over into the rest of the year.

"We're very excited for this season," Bovaird said. "There are more experienced wrestlers wearing the purple singlets than we've had in a long time, and these guys are tough and hard-working. I took extras in four weights, hoping to get them some varsity time. Logan Henry and Tyson Blancarte both stepped in and had some great wins for us – Logan against BVSU and Tyson against Fort Scott."

"Vance Hahn and Bryce Thompson both split time at 165 and were a combined 5-1 on the evening. Both are pushing each other on a daily basis in the practice room. Miles Meek has been rolling with Ashton, Brayden Yoder, and Xander Lucas at practices this season, but we weren't able to get him connected with a match unfortunately."

The Wildcats will try and continue their winning ways this Friday when they travel to Baldwin for the December Duals. They will square off with Prairie View, Baldwin, Independence and Burlington. Matches begin at 4:30 p.m.