

# Louisburg girls wrestling season comes to close at regionals



***Louisburg freshman Leola Eslinger works for a pin Saturday during the Class 4-1A regional wrestling tournament at Columbus High School.***

COLUMBUS – It was a small, but mighty version of the Louisburg girls wrestling team in 2024, and the Lady Cats had their fair share of ups and downs.

Still, they put their best foot forward last Saturday at the Class 4-1A regional tournament at Columbus High School. Louisburg nearly had its first ever state qualifier on the girls side.

Freshman Leola Eslinger finished one victory shy of a state bid with a loss in the consolation semifinals and ended her day with a 3-2 record.

Another freshman, Allison Martin, ended her season with an 0-2 record at 130 pounds.

Eslinger, who wrestled at 145 pounds, opened the tournament with a pin of Labette County's Alexis Spencer. In the quarterfinals, Eslinger was pinned by Independence's Caille Anne Fairbank in the second period.

That started Eslinger's journey in the back side of the bracket as she went on to pin Jayhawk-Linn's Abigail Stone and Erie's Madi Cope.

Then in the consolation semifinals, she battled Columbus' Madelyn Garcia, but was pinned and ended her season with a 28-9 record. Of those 28 wins, 27 came by pin.

As for Martin, she was pinned by Frontenac's Ariana Ortega to being the tournament and then lost a tough 2-1 decision to Girard's Bailey Glaser to end her season.

"A ton of great things came out of our girls season this year," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Both of our girls are freshmen – Allison is a first-year wrestler and earned four varsity wins along the way, and Leola brought a great deal of experience into her first year with us. Allison's last match was a 2-1 decision, and she was pushing her opponent the entire match. Had there been a little more experience and perhaps a little more time, she might have gotten the win there.

"In Leola's final match in the blood round, she got the first takedown against a senior and returning state qualifier. She locked up a cradle and looked like she was going to pull off the upset, but one little mistake and her opponent capitalized on it. Next year will be an awesome step up from this year, as we should have a bunch more girls coming up from the middle school who have been very active with our kids club. Big things are in store for our girls wrestling program, that's for sure."