Wildcat softball hopes experience can help it take next step



Louisburg senior Megan Quinn led the Wildcat softball team with five home runs last season.

In their final game of 2023, Louisburg nearly pulled off one of the biggest upsets in the regional semifinals.

As a No. 13 seed, the Wildcats almost knocked off No. 4 Ottawa as they played some of their best softball. With nearly everyone returning from that team, Louisburg is hoping to use that momentum and build confidence for 2024.

Louisburg returns five seniors and all have seen varsity time

since their freshmen years. It is an experienced team and one that is ready to make some noise in the Frontier League.

“This has been the best start to our season that we have had yet,” Louisburg coach Nick Chapman said. “We changed some things about our practices. The girls have bought into it and are working hard to make this a great season. Even better is that the energy and positive attitudes have been great.

“Our seniors have been great leaders to our younger girls. The vibe at practice has been fantastic. The girls are locked in right now and excited for this season to start, especially our seniors. They have the right mindset going into this season. I trust them and I know they are going to sell out to have one great last season.”

Three of those five seniors are returning all-league players for the Wildcats, including a pair of pitchers.

Seniors Izzy Moreland and Megan Quinn will lead the Wildcat pitching staff once again this season and bring experience with them after throwing varsity innings since they were freshmen.

Sophomore Raeya Keagle will also throw on the varsity level this season, but Chapman is excited to see what Moreland and Quinn can do for the rotation.



Louisburg senior Izzy Moreland is one of two returning starting pitchers for the Wildcats this season.

“Pitching is going to be where it all starts for us and we have two girls that have pitched for the last three years,” Chapman said. “Izzy and Megan are going to be great this year. They know their strengths and their weaknesses. Izzy and Brynley (Bauer) work really well together and so does Megan and Rylee (Hickey) and I’m excited for what they are going to accomplish. Megan and Izzy are not overpowering pitchers but they are really smart pitchers and I absolutely love that. I honestly think that’s better because it keeps batters thinking.

“In the mix this year we will also add in Raeya. She will throw some innings of relief for those two. She pitched really well in the Jamboree and got a lot of batters to give our defense the weak ground balls and fly balls we needed to make

plays. I’m really excited for what she is going to add to our pitching staff.”

The Wildcats will also return a bulk of their offense this season and it starts at the top of the lineup with Ashley Moreau. The Louisburg senior earned second team all-league honors a year ago thank to a .521 average and had 37 hits.

Moreland and Quinn also had big seasons at the plate for Louisburg. Moreland finished last season with a .493 average and 17 RBIs, while Quinn led the team with five home runs and had a .393 average.

“On offense, our goal is to build on what we did against Ottawa in our regional last year,” Chapman said. “We have been working on a lot of things that will help move and score baserunners that will keep the defense on their toes. We have a lot of girls that can lay a bunt down but also hit gap to gap. I think we can have a really dangerous offense if we execute.”

Defensively is where Chapman hopes his team can take the biggest step as the Wildcats gave up several unearned runs last season. He sees an improved group around the diamond.

Junior Addy Stohs and Keagle will split time at first base, while senior Jenna Cauthon will play second with Moreau at shortstop. Quinn and Moreland will share the third base spot.



Louisburg senior Ashley Moreau returns as the team's starting shorstop and top hitter from a season ago.

Senior Rylee Hickey, sophomore Shyloh Waite, along with juniors Brynley Bauer and Katie McKain will shore up the outfield. Hickey and Bauer will also split time behind the plate at catcher.

"Our biggest thing this season so far has been working to clean up our defense and making fundamental, smart plays," Chapman said. "It's going to take everyone to accomplish this."

The Wildcats will also see a little change to their schedule this season. In the offseason, the Kansas State High School Activities Association approved the increase in the number of games a team can play.

Teams across the state can now play a maximum of 26 games, up from the previous mark of 20.

“We have a packed schedule, but I honestly like that because we are playing more and practicing less,” Chapman said. “We need to play. That’s how we learn best is by playing and then making adjustments. We also get to see different teams that we could potentially see in postseason vs. league schools all the time. It’s going to be really good for us.”

As for what he hopes his team can accomplish, Chapman is hoping the Wildcats can take that next improve on improve off their 7-win season in 2023.

“I would love for our team to go above .500,” Chapman said. “It’s been a very long time since this program has gone .500 or better. I think if we can do that, we will put ourselves in a great position to get into a regional that we can compete in and then go win and get a shot at state.

“I want these seniors to go out with a bang. They have bought into this and have given me everything they have. I want them to enjoy their last season and for these younger girls to have success that they can carry into future seasons.”

Louisburg will open its season today as the Wildcats host Frontenac for a doubleheader. First pitch is set for 4 p.m. at Lewis-Young Park.