

Wildcats roll Lansing to lock up No. 1 seed on Senior Night



Louisburg senior Lexi Hampton battles a Lansing player for the ball Thursday during the Wildcats' Senior Night match.

In what was the final match of the regular

season, there was a lot

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A win would clinch the No. 1 seed in the regional tournament for the Wildcats – a goal they set for themselves prior to the season.

It was also an important one for emotional reasons. Louisburg had a chance to honor a 7-member senior class and their families on Senior Night.

In what was a pivotal moment of the season, the Wildcats played one of their best matches of the year. Louisburg scored a pair of goals in each half as the Wildcats cruised to a 4-1 victory over the Lions.

“For everything to shake out like we wanted it to, we had to win (Thursday),” Louisburg coach Ben York said. “When the girls got put in that scenario, I think they played really well and how we should be at this part in the season.

“This is a big goal, and there are a lot of teams in our classification that don’t play as hard of a schedule as we do. We played a lot of 6A and 5A schools and we have really tested ourselves this year.”

It was a special moment, especially for the seven Wildcat seniors that were recognized prior to the match. Lola Edwards, Macy Lemke, Lexi Hampton, Aliya Klugman, A.J. Fire, Hailey Sword and Ellery Allen all got the start on Senior Night.



Louisburg seniors (from left) Ellery Allen, Macy Lemke, Hailey Sword, Lexi Hampton, A.J. Fire, Lola Edwards and Aliya Klugman were all honored with their parents Thursday on Senior Night.

This group has been a special one for York, who is in his second season with the program.

“These seniors were put in a difficult position,” York said. “They were mentored and led by a different group ahead of them, with a different coaching staff that had a lot of success. Then they had to endure some changes with new coaches and start over again. I am very thankful that this group, right off the bat, said we believe in what you are going to do and we trust you. They listen every day, they work hard, and they are fun to be around.

“Last year’s senior class was really talented, and this year’s group had some big shoes to fill and they have done a great job with that. I hope they get to go as far as they can and make the most out of this season. They deserve all the success and are great leaders for the underclassmen. It is a very cool

class.”

To start the match, it was actually a pair of juniors that put the Wildcats (11-5-1) up early. Midfielder Rowan Yows got the Wildcats on the board first, then forward Baileigh Johnson added another goal to give them a 2-0 halftime lead.

Yows scored her second goal of the match in the second half and Hampton added a goal late to all but seal the win for the Wildcats.

Lemke, the team’s starting goalkeeper, had a chance to be on the shooting side of a penalty kick for once. Johnson was fouled in the box early in the second half, and the team elected for Lemke to take the penalty.

Her shot was saved thanks to a diving stop by the Lansing keeper.

Louisburg’s defense also kept the Lansing attack at bay as the back line of Sword, Faith Sewell, Lila Edwards, Jaden Bentz and Klugman limited the Lions’ chances on goal.

Although this was the second time the Wildcats have played Lansing this season, it was a tougher test this time around.



Louisburg senior Ellery Allen passes the ball off to a teammate Thursday against Lansing.

"I think Lansing played way better than when we played them earlier in the year," York said. "They were organized and played well, but we just played a really good game. We played to feet well. For some reason they played a high back line all night, and we were able to take advantage of that."

Now the Wildcats will prepare, for what they hope is a long postseason run. The No. 1 seed has earned them a bye in the first round and they will either play Kansas City Christian or Maranatha Academy on Thursday in the regional championship.

Not only did Louisburg get the No. 1 seed, it also got a breather when it needed it the most.

"It is very satisfying to play as well as you can this late in the season," York said. "We are still a little drug down physically with some injuries, but now we get to wait to Thursday to play and it couldn't have come at a better time."

That gives us a good amount of time to get healed up physically and mentally, and get all on the same page.”