

Wildcats' season comes to an end with loss to Miego in state quarters



Louisburg senior defender Hailey Sword knocks down a pass last Tuesday at home against Bishop Miego.

The task was a difficult one last Tuesday for the Louisburg girls soccer team.

The Wildcats hosted Bishop Miego – the 7-time defending state champion – for the Class 4-1A state quarterfinals at Wildcat Stadium. Going up against one of the state's best teams was always going to be a challenge.

Louisburg saw its season come to a close one win shy of the

state final four with a 7-0 setback to Miego.

"They are on a different level than us," Louisburg coach Ben York said. "We don't have the athletes to really compete with them. It doesn't really matter what formations you use, or what field you play on, you try to hope that they don't have a good game and they just played really well. They took advantage of opportunities and really crashed well in the box and we are still learning how to play fast like that.

"We aren't forced to play that fast during the season, and then you play a team that seems like they bring like 15 kids off the bench who are just as good. We are a good match for most of the 4A schools, we just aren't a match against them and that is unfortunate, but it is reality."



Louisburg senior goalie Macy Lemke gets on the ground for a save last week against Bishop Miego.

The Stags jumped on the Wildcats early as they scored the go-ahead goal just minutes into the contest and recorded five first half goals to go up 5-0 at halftime.

Miege added a pair of goals in the second half to seal the victory. The Stags went on to win their 8th straight championship later in the week with a double overtime win over Cair Paravel out of Topeka.

Although the loss was a difficult one to take, the Wildcats still put together a memorable season that saw their first regional title since 2021 and ended their season with a 13-5-1 record.

"This is a culmination of two years of hard work," York said. "I think last year we spent getting over the mental side of things we didn't do well, which was physical and mental toughness. This year we cleaned that up a lot and that is a big tribute to the senior class and putting in a lot of work. I hate this is the last thing we think about in what was a special season. This is not a reflection of our season at all. Our seniors put four hard years into this program."



Louisburg senior Lexi Hampton settles a pass last Tuesday during the Wildcats' state quarterfinal match.

The Wildcats had to say goodbye to a 7-member senior class, several of which have played big parts in the program since their freshman seasons. Lola Edwards, Lexi Hampton, Hailey Sword, Macy Lemke, Ellery Allen, Aliya Klugman and A.J. Fire all played their final game for Louisburg.

"The preparation that we had this year was good and I thought we made good progress throughout the year as well," York said. "We are still a work in progress and then we lose a group of great seniors. We make our way into the next season trying to get better at the things we didn't do well (against Miego) and hopefully that will carry with us and the junior class can then see what we need to do.

"I hate that the last thought of the season is this, when our

season was so much more than just one game. That for me is the shame of it all. Could we have played better than we did? Probably, and we gave up things that we shouldn't have and gave them a few runs. We will just keep doing the best we can to keep moving forward."