

# Wildcats secure first league championship since 2002



***The Louisburg baseball team defeated Baldwin on Friday at Lewis-Young Park to secure its first league title in 22 years. It has been a long while since the Louisburg baseball team had won a Frontier League title – 22 years to be exact.***

Although the Wildcats had already clinched at least a share of the title prior to Friday's home game with Baldwin, they wanted to be selfish.

The Wildcats made sure they got it all to themselves.

Louisburg jumped out to an early lead and never looked back in a 12-6 victory over the Bulldogs to secure its first league title since 2002.

"That is pretty crazy that it has been this long," Louisburg coach Kade Larson said. "We have had some good teams over the

years, and this team top to bottom has been awesome. Everyone knows their role and they are laying the groundwork for success in the future as well.”

Pitching played a big role for the Wildcats on Friday as junior Meade Rutherford gave the team five innings and allowed zero earned runs and struck out six.



***Junior Meade Rutherford picked up the win for Louisburg as he struck out six over five innings.***

Senior Declan Battle got the final two innings of work as he struck out two and gave up just two hits. All six of Baldwin’s runs were unearned thanks to some Louisburg errors.

“Meade came out and threw really well,” Larson said. “He gave us five solid innings and Declan came in and shut the door. We took great approaches at the plate and we were able to jump on them early and we never looked back. We probably gave up a

couple runs that we shouldn't have, but at the end of the day we locked them down when we needed to."

The Wildcats got out to an early lead as they scored one in the first and three more in the second inning. Baldwin cut the Louisburg lead to 4-3 in the top of the fifth, but the Wildcats responded with five runs in their half of the fifth to pull away.

Louisburg sophomore Danny Napier was big at the plate for the Wildcats all night. Napier led the Wildcats with three hits, including a pair of doubles, to go along with 5 RBIs.



***Louisburg senior Nathaniel Lamm celebrates with his teammates Friday following his home run.***

Senior Nathaniel Lamm had a solo home run in the contest, while seniors Jack Anderson and Battle each drove home two runs. Senior Jackson Howard and junior Luke Schultz each had

an RBI as well.

Sophomore Bristol Barbour had two hits. Senior Brody McGreer scored three runs and another senior, Conner Heston, scored twice.

The Wildcats are now 16-4 on the season as they have put together big victories throughout the year and Friday against Baldwin was no exception.

“It is huge,” Larson said of the league title. “The guys worked really hard for this. Everyone on the team had a job to do, and they came together and they got it done. We found a way to win and the guys have done that over and over this season.”

Now that a league title is out of the way, the Wildcats now have their eyes focused on the final week of the regular season and the postseason. Louisburg will play its final league contest tonight when it travels to Paola for a doubleheader.

The Wildcats will then host Basehor-Linwood for a single game Wednesday, before focusing on the regional tournament.



***Louisburg coach Kade Larson gets the celebratory water bath thanks to catcher Danny Napier following the Wildcats' win Friday over Baldwin.***

It is a group that has pulled together at different times throughout the season and Larson believes they still have more left in them.

“We are starting to play some really good ball right now,” Larson said. “We still have some things we need to clean up. I don’t think we have played our best game yet, and that is what the guys continue to strive for, is to play their best game. We are starting to peak at the right time and hopefully we can roll that into regionals and put a little playoff run together.

“It is a really tight knit group. Everyone is for everyone and they don’t care who gets the job done, as long as it gets done. It starts with the seniors, all the way down to our freshmen on junior varsity. Everyone is for the team and that

is all we can ask for.”