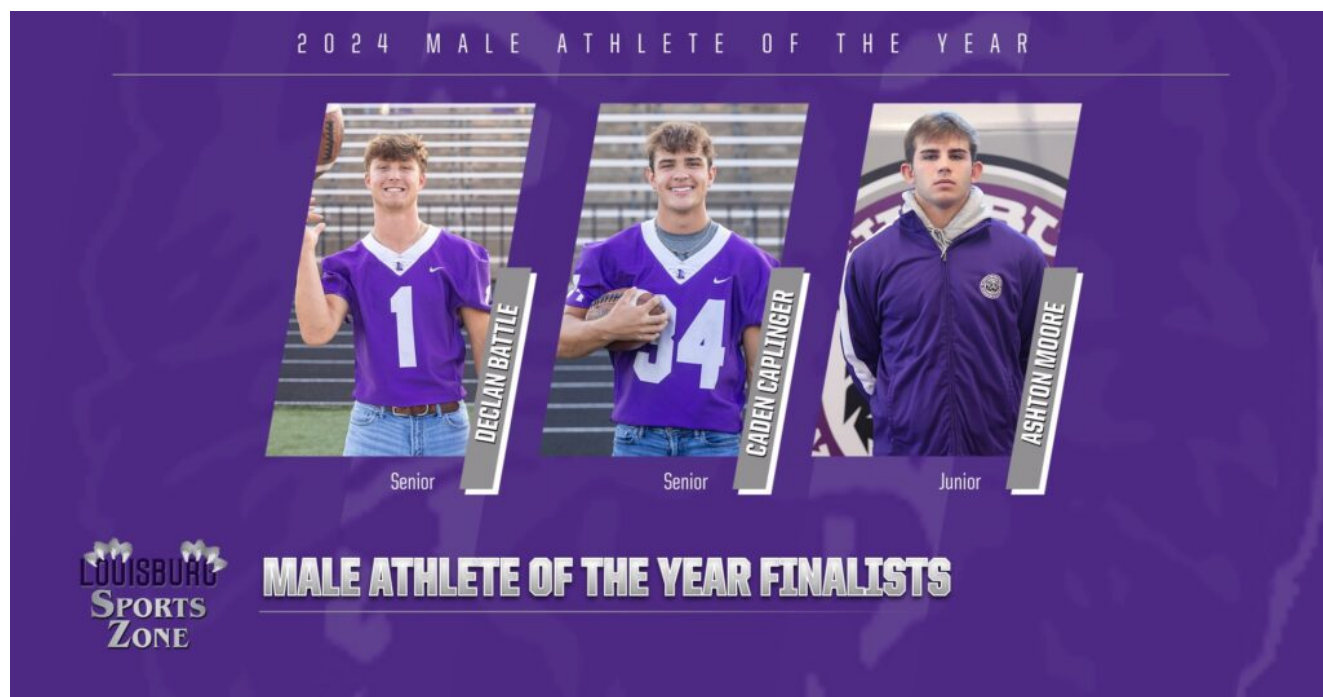


2024 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year Finalists



Louisburg seniors Declan Battle and Caden Caplinger, along with junior Ashton Moore, are the three finalists for the 2024 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year award.

For the seventh consecutive year, Louisburg Sports Zone will be handing out an Athlete of the Year honor to a male and female athlete at Louisburg High School. I wanted the opportunity to recognize those who exemplify what it means to be an "athlete."

Although I am giving out the award, I wanted the process to be subjective, so I asked the head coaches at LHS to help me out. I asked each coach to send me nominations of who they thought exemplified the Athlete of the Year honor. Then they voted for their top 3 male and female athletes and I tabulated the results and determined the winner. The winner will be announced in the coming days.

Below are the three finalists for the Male Athlete of the Year

award in alphabetical order by last name.



DECLAN BATTLE – SENIOR – FOOTBALL, BASEBALL

Declan was a three year starting quarterback for the Wildcats and this year became the school's leading passer and fifth on the list for leading rusher as a team captain. Battle guided the Wildcats to their second straight Frontier League title and an undefeated league record.

Declan was a 1st team All-Frontier League quarterback and defensive back. He was an all-state pick from multiple media outlets and was a finalist for the Frank Fontana Award, which is given annually to the best all-around small school player in Class 1-4 on the Kansas and Missouri sides of the metro.

In 10 games for the Wildcats, Battle completed 105 passes for 1,364 yards and had 16 touchdowns to just two interceptions. He also did a lot of damage on the ground with 1,009 yards rushing and 16 more touchdowns. As a defensive back, Battle finished with 36 tackles and also had an interception for a touchdown. He will join the Washburn University football team next season.

On the baseball diamond, Battle helped the Wildcats to its first league title since 2002 and first regional championship since 2009. He led the team in triples, stolen bases and runs scored that earned him first team all league and first team all state outfield. He was also the team's best reliever earning multiple saves on the mound.

Battle was atop the Wildcat lineup all season and set the tone in several games. He finished with a .378 average to go along with 34 hits, five doubles, three triples, a home run and had 23 RBIs.

He also led the team with 41 runs scored, which is a school record and also had a team-high 15 stolen bases. He also holds three individual career team records for runs scored (102), triples (8) and stolen bases (47).



CADEN CAPLINGER — SENIOR — FOOTBALL, TRACK

Caden was a team captain for the Wildcat football team this past season and was a big piece of back-to-back Frontier League championship teams. Caplinger was an all-league selection on both sides of the ball, as a wide receiver and defensive back. He also holds the most career receptions in Louisburg football history.

Caplinger was named to the All-Frontier League second team at wide receiver and defensive back. He led the Wildcats with 33 catches, 510 yards receiving and four touchdowns. On defense, he finished with 41 tackles, 1.5 sacks, six pass breakups and an interception.

On the track, Caplinger is a two-time pole vault champion and a state medalist in the 4×100 relay. He was set to try for a third straight, but suffered a knee injury that ended his season. Caplinger won the season opening meet at the Ottawa Invitational, before having to sit out with the injury. He will be joining the Washburn University track team next season.



ASHTON MOORE – JUNIOR – FOOTBALL, WRESTLING, TRACK

Ashton put together a memorable football season for the Wildcats. Moore was one of the leaders of the Wildcat defense this past season. As a first-team All-Frontier League player on both sides of the ball, he posted a team-high 125 tackles,

including eight for a loss. He also had four forced fumbles and two sacks. He was named a finalist for the Bobby Bell Award, which is given annually to the best Class 1-4 offensive lineman/defensive lineman or linebacker in the KC metro area.

Moore was also the team's starting running back and made things difficult on opposing defenses. He carried the load for the Wildcats as he carried the ball 151 times for 1,110 yards and had 15 touchdowns. He also finished with 292 yards receiving and three more scores to earn first team honors.

On the wrestling mat, Moore was a state medalist as he took fourth at 190 pounds after making it to the state semifinals with an injured knee. He finished the season with 38 wins. He leads the program in the following categories: Career takedowns (117), career nearfall-3 (34), career escapes (57), career team points (510), season takedowns (51), season team points (229), and season pins (27). He led the team this year with most wins (38), most nearfall-2 (8), and the fastest pin (7 seconds).

Moore was also a returning state qualifier for the Louisburg 4×100-meter relay, but saw his track season come to an early end due to an injury.