

Sword named Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year



Louisburg senior Hailey Sword was named the 2024 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year.

The Louisburg volleyball and girls soccer teams had memorable seasons last year.

Louisburg volleyball made the state tournament and came home with a fourth-place state medal. The girls soccer team also reached the state level as the Wildcats earned a regional championship and a spot in the state quarterfinals.

The common link for the two teams was senior Hailey Sword.

Sword played pivotal roles on both teams and those were big reasons why she was chosen as the 2024 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year.

“The award means so much to me,” Sword said. “It really is a blessing that putting in hard work over the years could be

recognized. I could not have been a successful athlete without the amazing coaching and support that I had.”

Sword, who will be playing volleyball at Graceland University this coming fall, was a big piece of the Louisburg volleyball team.

She played all six rotations for the Wildcats and was a big factor at the net and on defense. Sword tallied a team-high 308 kills and finished second on the team with 42 aces. Defensively, Sword was also strong in the back row as she was second on the team with 295 digs.

“As an overall athlete, Hailey has made a big impact in both of her main sports at LHS,” Louisburg volleyball coach Leanna Willer said. “Her natural athleticism made her stand out from the beginning, but her passion for each sport helped her to play both volleyball and soccer at an extremely high level. She had opportunities to play either one at the next level! We are so excited to see her continue her volleyball journey, and we’ll be supporting her 100 percent of the way.”

She was selected to the KVA All-State Tournament team after she helped Louisburg to a fourth place finish at state. Sword also earned honorable mention All-Frontier League honors.



Louisburg senior Hailey Sword poses with her athlete of the year plaque with coaches Ben York and Leanna Willer.

“Hailey has played a huge role in the volleyball team’s success during her time at LHS,” Willer said. “Each year her role changed slightly, but her competitive nature, aggressive swing, and ball control each made a big impact on the court. Eventually, we came to rely on her as a complete six rotation player available to be an offensive threat at all times and to make big defensive plays as well.

“Hailey figured out what her team needed and transformed into an electric player with a standout personality on the court that launched our state tournament run last year, and she continued to be a leader as a senior.”

On the pitch, Sword also found a lot of success. After helping Louisburg to the state quarterfinals, she earned a lot of individual honors.

Sword was named to the All-Frontier League first team as a defender and was selected second team all-state. She was a four-year letter winner and she was a part of a school record setting defense that allowed the fewest goals in a season. She also tallied three goals and two assists.

“Hailey was a team captain this year and our best leader on the field,” Louisburg coach Ben York said. “A late injury to a teammate forced her to play center back for us. She excelled in the role, all while we were transitioning into playing with two centerbacks from a sweeper/stopper formation from last year.”

She, like a lot of athletes, had to overcome adversity in both sports. However, Sword is appreciative of everything she, and her teammates, accomplished.

“Playing sports in Louisburg has been a great experience,” Sword said. “I learned so much about the sports that I participated in but also about life. Louisburg athletics really made me feel that I had a family and a place in Louisburg. I would not be the person I am today without the teams that I got to be a part of. It was not always perfect or what I maybe wanted, but I would not change a thing and it always worked out in the end.”

Previous winners:

2018: Isabelle Holtzen

2019: Carson Buffington

2020: Reilly Ratliff-Becher

2021: Alyse Moore

2022: Delaney Wright

2023: Adyson Ross