

McCaskill leads Wildcats in challenging Tonganoxie tourney



Louisburg senior Jay McCaskill won the 165-pound weight class at the Randy Starcher Invitational at Tonganoxie High School.

TONGANOXIE – The Louisburg boys wrestling team faced its toughest competition to date as the Wildcats traveled to the Randy Starcher Invitational on Dec. 21 in Tonganoxie.

The tournament featured a pair of state-ranked teams in Tonganoxie and St. Thomas Aquinas, along with traditionally good teams in Frontenac, Lansing and Savannah (Mo.). With all that came several state-ranked wrestlers, and the Wildcats were more than tested.

Louisburg battled its way through its final tournament of 2024

as the Wildcats sent six wrestlers to the podium as each of them had a top four finish, including senior Jay McCaskill, who won the 165-pound title.

In all, the Wildcats finished sixth in the team standings out of 10 teams with 130 points. Tonganoxie won the tournament title with 202 points, as it edged out runner-up Savannah by one.

“Tonganoxie definitely upped the ante with how tough their tournament is,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “The guys definitely stepped up to the challenge. That’s our motto this year – Carpe Diem, or ‘seize the day.’ We’ve been talking about it in the sense that our goal is to be able to rise up to any challenge or obstacle in our way. Tournaments like what Tongie puts on is a great measuring stick to help us learn and refocus.”



Louisburg senior Canaan Clayton puts an opponent on his back on Dec. 21 in Tonganoxie.

McCaskill led the charge for Louisburg as he rolled through the 165-pound bracket with ease. He finished the day with a 5-0 record and improved his season record to 11-0.

The Louisburg senior also never had to work outside the first period as all five of his victories were by pin in under two minutes. That included a pin of Savannah's Kaiden Phillips in the championship match in just 1 minute and 3 seconds.

"Jay is in an incredible groove right now," Bovaird said. "He started off fighting an illness that kept him off the mats the first week, but since the December Duals, he's been a pinning machine. At Tonganoxie, he had his sights on getting the gold medal, and he did it in a dominant fashion."

The five other Wildcats who reached the podium each finished fourth overall. Seniors Canaan Clayton (120 pounds), Mika McKitrick (132), sophomore Bryce Thompson (157), along with seniors Brayden Yoder (190) and Miles Meek (285) all earned a medal.

McKitrick was 3-2 on the day with a pair of pins, while Clayton, Thompson and Yoder each recorded a pair of wins and Meek was 1-3.



Louisburg senior Miles Meek gets some back points during the team's tournament in Tonganoxie. Meek finished fourth at 285 pounds.

Wildcat senior Ashton Moore had a tough weight class at 215 pounds that featured two state-ranked wrestlers and he took fifth overall.

Moore, who is currently ranked No. 3 in Class 4A, lost to Savannah's Cooper Burnside, who was a state runner-up last season and Junction City's Chris Coy, who was a state placer at Class 6A. On the day, Moore finished with a 4-2 record.

Junior Vance Hahn also took fifth at 175 pounds as he won his final three matches on the day, all by pin.

So far, Bovaird has liked what he has seen from his group as the 2024 season has come to a close.

"It was great seeing the team step up and scrap with some outstanding competition," Bovaird said. "We spend a lot of

time talking about mindset, and before the tournament, the topic was being disciplined and competing with purpose. The first part of our competition season is mostly duals, so it was nice to go into the break with the guys having a chance to bring home some medals.”

Wildcats get road dual win over Olathe West

Louisburg hit the road on Dec. 19 as the Wildcats traveled to Olathe West for its final dual before the holiday break and won 43-34.

Louisburg’s Myke McKitrick recorded a big pin for the Wildcats at 126 pounds, while Brayden Yoder won by decision over a state qualifier at 190 pounds in two pivotal matches.

“The Olathe West dual is always a tough, but friendly competition,” coach Bovaird said. “I like their program and how their coach runs things, and we can always count on it being a battle.

Levi Cotter (106), Logan Henry (138), Bryce Thompson (157), Vance Hahn (175) and Ashton Moore (215) also earned wins for the Wildcats.