

Wildcats battle through injuries, illness to take fourth at Fort Scott



Louisburg senior Greysen Dixon picks up an opponent Friday during the Fort Scott Dual Tournament.

FORT SCOTT – The Louisburg wrestling team has been practicing the last month in hopes of getting out to a strong start to its season.

Unfortunately for the Wildcats, injuries and illness hampered those plans Friday for the Fort Scott Dual Tournament. Louisburg was missing several starters in the competition, but the good news, there were several wrestlers to take their place.

Louisburg finished fourth overall with a 2-3 record on the day

with wins over Anderson County and Jayhawk-Linn as the Wildcats were still able to field a full lineup despite the absences.

“There have been years when we had key wrestlers out with injuries or illness, and we didn’t have many options to filling those gaps,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “This year, though, we’ve got depth that we haven’t had before. Not only were we able to fill all 14 weight classes, but we filled them with wrestlers who have experience.”

The Wildcats defeated Anderson County, 78-6, and Jayhawk-Linn, 48-35. Louisburg opened the day with a loss to Blue Valley Southwest (54-24) and fell to Atchison County Community (49-29) and Fort Scott (48-36).

Sophomore Levi Cotter proved to be one of the bright spots for the Wildcats. The 106-pound wrestler finished the day with a 5-0 record, which included three first period pins.

Senior Canaan Clayton finished with a 3-1 day at 120 pounds, while fellow senior Mika McKitrick was 4-1 at 132 pounds with a pair of pins. Senior Miles Meek (215 pounds) also ended the day with a 4-1 record.



Louisburg senior Canaan Clayton tries to turn an opponent Friday at the Fort Scott Dual Tournament.

Parker Showalter (113 pounds), Spencer Mattison (138), Bryce Thompson (157) and Brody Pemberton (165) were each 3-2 on the day. Brayden Yoder (190) and Myke McKitrick (126) were both 2-3.

Keegan Rogers (120), Greysen Dixon (144), Vance Hahn (175) and Owen Ebenstein (285) each had a victory. Freshman Bo Ballard (150) was 0-5.

“At this point in the season, I know records don’t mean much,” Bovaird said. “We had great showings from Greysen, Bryce, Vance and Brayden. They all had tough weights, but they were absolute warriors throughout the tournament. Myke filled in at 126 and Brody filled in at 165, and I couldn’t be more proud of them. Bo made his first varsity appearance at 150, and he had a bracket with a bunch of experienced kids. He was fearless the entire time, giving it his best shot and never backing down from a tough match.”

Along with a new season comes some new rules and that is in the scoring department. Starting this season, high school wrestlers will be inbounds with only one point of contact of either wrestler inside or on the boundary line.

Previously, wrestlers were considered to be inbounds if a total of two supporting points of either wrestler were inside or on the boundary line. The two supporting points could be two supporting points of one wrestler or one supporting point of each wrestler inside or on the boundary line.

In addition, points awarded for a near-fall have been revised. Two points will be awarded when near-fall criteria are held for two seconds, three points for three seconds, four points for four seconds and five points if the defensive wrestler is injured, indicates an injury or bleeding occurs after the four-point near-fall has been earned.

In another change, opportunities to earn more points will also be available when executing a takedown. Beginning next season, wrestlers will be awarded three match points instead of two when securing a takedown.

“The new scoring rules are going to take some getting used to, but I think I like it,” Bovaird said. “I mean, you get one takedown and then some back points, and you could potentially be up 7-0 in no time. That’s almost halfway to a tech fall. The out-of-bounds rules are now so much easier to apply and interpret, which was very refreshing to see.”

Louisburg will look to get some of their wrestlers back Thursday when they host several schools for the December Duals Tournament. Matches begin at 4:30 p.m.