Yoder, Moore lead Wildcats with titles at Husky Invitational



Louisburg seniors (kneeling from left) Brayden Yoder and Ashton Moore won individual titles last Saturday at the Husky Invitational at Blue Valley Northwest.

OVERLAND PARK – In what was one of their toughest tournaments on the season, a pair of Louisburg wrestlers brought home top honors.

Seniors Brayden Yoder and Ashton Moore earned individual titles at the 2-day Husky Invitational last Friday and Saturday at Blue Valley Northwest High School.

In all, the Wildcats medaled four wrestlers in the 21-team tournament that included three state-ranked programs.

Louisburg finished eighth overall with 307 points.

“Once again, the Husky Invitational didn’t disappoint,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “We got into this tournament because we needed some tough competition to help prepare us for the post-season. That’s exactly what we needed, and it’s exactly what we got. All of our guys got some great competition that was at the level they needed.

“Overall, we had a pretty strong performance. We tied our highest performance with eight place, but we also scored an all-time high with our team points. Also, based on the records I got when I took over as head coach, this was the first time we’ve ever had two champions, which is a pretty nice accomplishment.”

Yoder entered the tournament as the No. 1 seed at 190 pounds and he showed why. The Louisburg senior won his first five matches of the day by pin, including a semifinal pin over Rockhurst’s Chase Quinn.

That set up a match with Lawrence Free State’s Zane Shaw in the championship, and Yoder battled to a 2-1 sudden victory to improve his record to 25-6 on the season.

“In the championship match, Brayden was solid and disciplined with his neutral wrestling, which resulted in him getting a couple of great stall calls against his opponent,” Bovaird said. “He was very smart on his feet, and when they went into overtime and his opponent was trying to avoid wrestling him, that ‘fleeing the mat’ call was pretty indisputable.”

As for Moore, he picked up a big victory of his own, but his came in the semifinals at 215 pounds. He squared off with Andover’s Tate Hutchinson, who is ranked No. 3 in Class 5A.

Moore, who was ranked No. 3 in the state in Class 4A coming into the tournament, got a 6-3 decision over Hutchinson to advance to the championship. It set up a rematch with Topeka-

Seaman’s Deyton Mentzer, and Moore got the third period pin to win the title and improve his record to 25-2.

“Ashton did great throughout the tournament,” Bovaird said. “The big match was actually the semifinals against Tate Hutchinson of Andover. That kid had beaten Ashton at this tournament every year since their freshman year – last year was a 3-0 decision in the finals. This year, Ashton had his number and stepped up big-time in the semis.

“In the finals, he had a rematch with a kid he’d beaten earlier in the tournament. Ashton did a remarkable job keeping his head and his focus against an opponent who was obviously trying to get him distracted and off his game.”

The Wildcats also had two other medalists as sophomore Levi Cotter (106 pounds) and Mika McKitrick (132) had top six finishes.

Cotter finished in fifth place with a 4-3 record and had to battle his way to through the consolation bracket. In his fifth place match, Cotter earned second period pin in what was a revenge win over Andover’s Jace Dryden.

McKitrick posted three wins in the tournament as he squared off with Blue Valley West’s Scott Fohlmeister in the fifth place match. Although he was eventually pinned, it was still a successful run for the Wildcat senior.

Louisburg seniors Jay McCaskill (165) and Miles Meek (285) each finished just outside medal contention as they took seventh and eighth, respectively.

“Levi finished the tournament with a revenge win against an Andover kid who’d beaten him by a major decision earlier in the tournament,” Bovaird said. “Mika is having a great senior season, making huge strides from last year. He’s really looking strong on his feet and on top.

“Jay had a very tough bracket, but he’s showing that he’s a dynamic and dangerous wrestler in any position, whether it’s on his feet, on top, or on bottom. Miles is an under-sized 285-pounder, but he’s doing a great job with his strength, work ethic, and athleticism. He’s a very coachable kid, and he’ll have a great conclusion to his senior year.”

Louisburg is back in action Thursday as it hosts Emporia and Ottawa for Senior Night as the Wildcats honor their 11 seniors. Matches begin at 6 p.m.