

Wildcat wrestling earns split on Senior Night



Louisburg senior Will Showalter dives in on an opponent Thursday against Ottawa on Senior Night.

The home part of the Louisburg wrestling schedule came to an end Thursday as the Wildcats hosted both Emporia and Ottawa in a double dual.

Despite a loss to Emporia to start the night, the Wildcats bounced back and ended their home contest with a 74-6 victory over Ottawa.

It also happened to be Senior Night as the Wildcats honored 11 wrestlers and two managers during what was a special night on the mat.

Seniors Blake Oliphant, Greysen Dixon, Logan Henry, Will Showalter, Canaan Clayton, Mika McKittrick, Brayden Yoder, Ashton Moore, Miles Meek, Jay McCaskill and Jonas Briley, along with managers Lacy Burton and Kaylee Crooks, were all recognized in-between the duals with their families.

“I feel like every class is special to me, and that’s no different with this group,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “What a phenomenal group of young men. They’ve truly set a high bar for expectations – on the mat, in the classroom, in other sports, and in life. Several of these guys have been wrestling continually since a young age, and some of them started as freshmen in high school. It’s a very diverse group, experience-wise, but that changes nothing about how proud I am of them.”

In the first dual of the night, Emporia jumped out to a big lead on the Wildcats and they nearly made a 30-plus point comeback, but fell just short, 40-36.

The Wildcats trailed 37-6, but sophomore Bryce Thompson (157 pounds) and senior Jay McCaskill (165) each earned pins. Emporia was then open in the next three weight and set up a winner-take-all in the heavyweight match.



Louisburg honored 13 seniors during Thursday's double dual against Emporia and Ottawa. Pictured (front row, from left) are Senior managers Lacy Burton, Kaylee Crooks, along with wrestlers Blake Oliphant, Greysen Dixon, Logan Henry, Will Showalter, (back row) Canaan Clayton, Mika McKitrick, Brayden Yoder, Ashton Moore, Miles Meek, Jay McCaskill and Jonas Briley

Louisburg senior Miles Meek forced his opponent to overtime in the 285-pond match, but lost by decision.

"Historically, Emporia has always been a tough-as-nails program," Bovaird said. "Their coaching staff includes a couple of guys that I knew from when I was in school, and they are Emporia alumni (head coach Brook Medrano, who won multiple state medals for Emporia, and Dusty Spaulding, a 4-time state champion for Emporia). I knew heading into this dual that their program would be tough.

"I felt like a couple things could have gone differently, which would have changed the outcome of the dual, but at the

same time, we got out there and competed with them. Almost got the dual win at the end, too. Exciting to say the least, but it gave us a chance to reflect and learn a few things about what we need to focus on doing for the final stretch of the season."



Louisburg senior Jonas Briley gets a pin during his Senior Night match against Ottawa.

Against Ottawa, the Wildcats put together a dominating performance as they lost just one match in the 74-6 victory.

The highlight of the dual came at 215 pounds, when Louisburg's Ashton Moore, who is ranked No. 2 in Class 4A, squared off with No. 4 Seth Ferguson. Moore dominated the match as he won by a 9-1 major decision.

"I was a little uneasy about that match going into it," Moore said. "Ashton had been sick on Wednesday, so I didn't know how

that would impact his performance. The good thing is that Ashton is the kind of kid who doesn't let a little illness impact his efforts.

"In his match, he looked like he'd been feeling absolutely great the day before. You couldn't tell any different. He was conservative when he needed to be, and he opened up when there was a window of opportunity. He's been laser-focused this season, and I'm excited to see where it takes him the next few weeks."



Louisburg senior Brayden Yoder earned career win No. 100 Thursday on Senior Night at Louisburg High School.

The final dual also brought about a special moment for Brayden Yoder. The Louisburg senior recorded career win No. 100 with a pin at 190 pounds, and improved his record to 25-6 on the year.

“How special is that, to earn your 100th career win at home on senior night?,” Bovaird said. “I’m so proud of Brayden, who is a great kid with a solid head on his shoulders. He gets the job done in the classroom, on the football field, and on the wrestling mat. He truly is an incredible leader with a very bright future.”