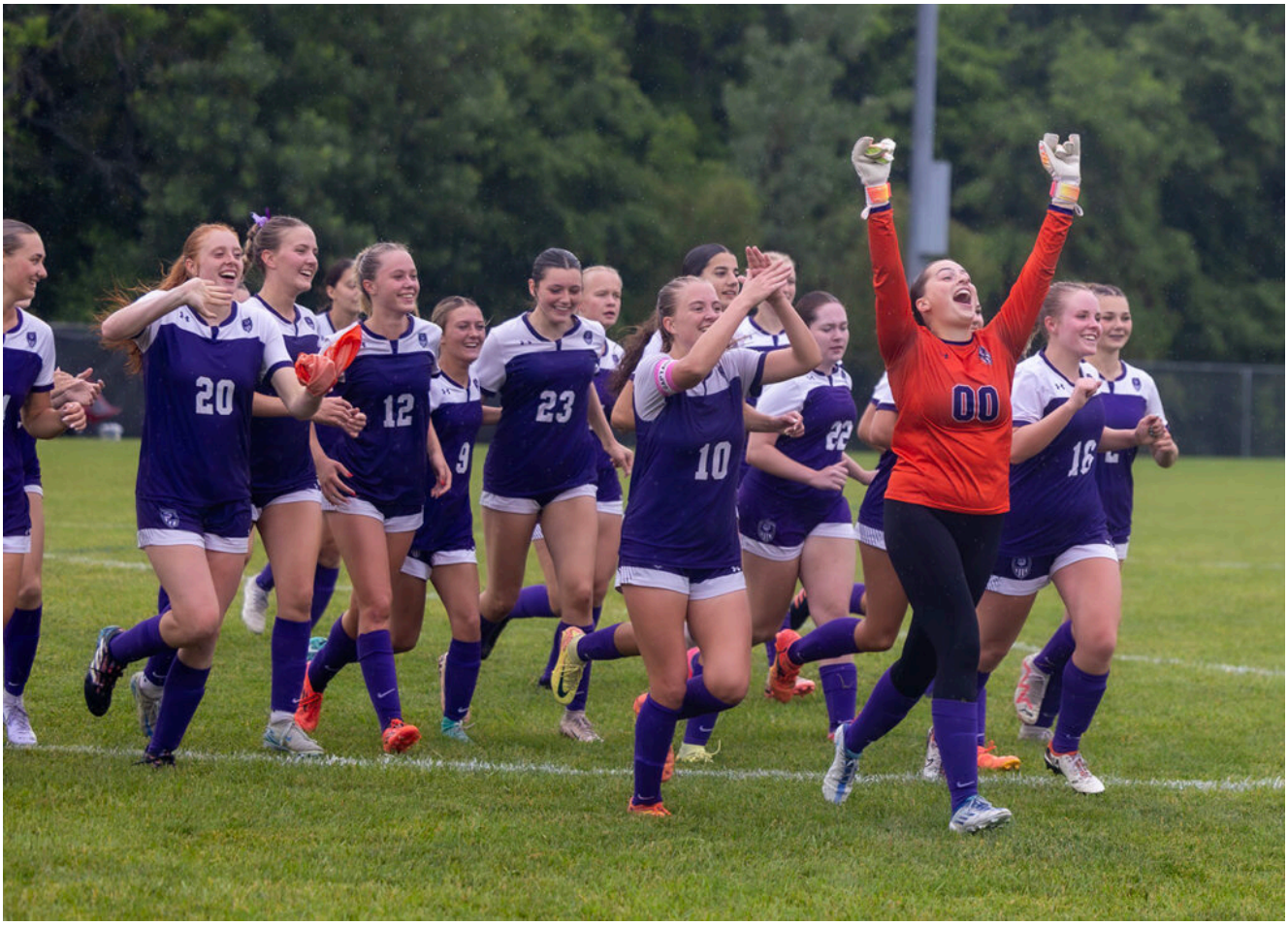
# FINAL FOUR BOUND: Wildcats shutout Eudora in state quarters




***Members of the Louisburg girls soccer team celebrate with their fans following their 2-0 victory over Eudora on May 26 in the Class 4-1A state quarterfinals in Louisburg.***

It may have been wet, muddy and just miserable weather for a day in late May, but for the Louisburg girls soccer team, all that didn't matter.

For the Wildcats, it was a beautiful day. Nothing was going to dampen their spirits.

Louisburg faced off against Eudora in the Class 4-1A state quarterfinal game on May 25 as it played for a spot in the state final four.

For the first time since 2021, the Wildcats got it. Louisburg shutout Eudora, 2-0, to earn its first state quarterfinal win in four years.

“It is an amazing achievement to make it to the state final four and I couldn’t be more proud of this team,” senior captain Jaden Bentz said. “This really shows the amount of hard work we’ve all put in throughout the season and it’s nice knowing it has paid off. I couldn’t ask for a better group of girls to play with. When the final whistle blew we all were filled with excitement and ran to each other, and that shows the tight sisterly bond our team has.”

Louisburg head coach Jordan Roquemore was an assistant the last time the Wildcats were in the state semifinals and he could tell his team wanted this one more than any game this season.

“I have never seen the team so jazzed about anything all season as when the game was over,” Roquemore said. “We are all really excited for the opportunity to compete in the Final Four this year.”



***Louisburg senior Baileigh Johnson pushes the ball up the field against Eudora during the state quarterfinals.***

The wet weather provided less-than-ideal playing conditions and it caused problems for both teams. Louisburg, however, struck first with a goal right before halftime.

Senior Rowan Yows sent a cross into the box, which found the foot of sophomore Merritt McIntire, and McIntire scored her second playoff goal in the game's 38th minute.

"I was incredibly excited for her as it's a big deal to score in a state quarterfinal," Yows said. "Those crosses had been open all game and I think she knew that and knew what I was gonna do. Our underclassmen are really skilled and it shows."

That goal gave the Wildcats the momentum going into halftime and put the pressure on the Cardinals. With the rain coming down harder, the Wildcats made it more difficult early in the second half.



***Louisburg junior Mena Fercho clears the ball during the Wildcats' May 26 game against Eudora.***

Yows dribbled down the right side, past the defense, and found the corner of the net to put Louisburg up 2-0 just three minutes into the second half.

From there, the Louisburg defense took care of the rest.

The back line of Bentz, Lila Edwards, Caroline Apple, Faith Sewell, Rylee Moore and Sydney York limited Eudora's shots on goal.

Whatever got past them, senior goalie Ally Brown took care of the rest as she recorded her 12th shutout of the season.

"We knew that Eudora was not going to be an easy game," Roquemore said. "They work hard and play very physical. We discussed team defense and I was pleased overall with how we limited their chances. We still allowed a few opportunities to them, but Ally was there when we needed with a couple of key

saves.”

It is a defense that has been a strength for the Wildcats all season and has kept them in many of their games.




***Louisburg junior Faith Sewell shields a Eudora player from the ball.***

“Our defense is solid this year,” Bentz said. “A lot of different players have really stepped up and contributed to the back line. The defense was really strong against a tough Eudora team. It was a very physical and fast game, but the defense reads each other very well and we have great trust in each other allowing us to recover really fast and to not panic.”

The challenges will only get tougher from here on out. Louisburg (16-3) will host Topeka-Hayden (12-7) in the Class 4-1A state semifinals at 6 p.m. on May 28. Win or lose, the Wildcats will travel to Wichita on May 31 for either the state championship or third-place game.

Hayden knocked off the No. 1 seed in the West, Wichita-Trinity, in a 2-0 contest in its state quarterfinal game. It will be one of the tougher opponents the Wildcats have seen this season.

“t’s a great opportunity to get to host the semifinal game this year,” Roquemore said. “Our work during the season afforded us this position and we aim to take advantage of having home field for the game. Topeka Hayden is a really good team and it is going to be a tough matchup. We’re looking forward to the competition.”

For seniors Yows, Bentz, Brown, Baileigh Johnson and Riley May, it will be their final contest on their home field and they hope they can end it on a good note.

“Going to a semifinal any year is exciting, but being a 1 seed and hosting makes it 10-times better,” Yows said. “Having our community support us really puts the pressure on the other team and gives us a leg up. Being promised two more games is also a great feeling, especially at the end of my high school career. I want to play as many games as possible with this team.”