

Wildcat soccer takes fourth at state for best finish since 2021



The Louisburg girls soccer team took fourth at the Class 4-1A state tournament on May 31 in Wichita. Members of the team are (front row, from left) Brinley Ewy, Lila Edwards, Rylee Moore, Baileigh Johnson, Jaden Bentz, Ally Brown, Riley May, Rowan Yows, Merritt McIntire, Layla Sewell; (back row) assistant coach Lily McDaniel, Courtney Johnson, Ellia Gibbons, Sydney York, Caroline Apple, Cora Roche, Kahlan Harris, Janina Schmidt, Briella Diehl, Mena Fercho, Faith Sewell and head coach Jordan Roquemore.

WICHITA – The Louisburg girls soccer team put together its best season in four years and had an opportunity to put an exclamation point on it.

Louisburg squared off with Rose Hill in the third-place game

of the Class 4-1A Kansas State Soccer Championships on May 31 at Wichita's Stryker Complex. It didn't take long for the Wildcats to get on the board.

The Wildcats struck first in the game's opening minutes, but Rose Hill tied it in the first half and scored late in the second to hand Louisburg a 2-1 loss.

Louisburg was coming off a 2-0 loss in the state semifinals on May 28 as it hosted its first state semifinal game against Topeka-Hayden.

"Honestly, I was really proud of how we played this game," Louisburg coach Jordan Roquemore said. "Rose Hill is an exceptional squad and we not only kept them at bay defensively, we were very successful in creating attack opportunities. We were nearly even with them for shots on goal and I thought it was a very well-matched game for us."

The Wildcats (16-5) wasted no time getting on the board as senior Rowan Yows scored in the 5th minute on an assist from freshman Kahlan Harris to put the Wildcats up 1-0.



Rowan Yows celebrates with her teammates following an early goal in the third place match of the Class 4-1A state tournament on May 31 in Wichita.

"Scoring that goal pretty early into the game really fired us up, giving us the confidence that we deserved to be there playing in that game," Yows said. "Kahlan and I have been scoring goals like that all season, simple give and go's that got us right in front of the goal. Even though we didn't come out with a win, our effort was very visible in that game and I don't think the score reflects that."

Rose Hill tied the game in the 10th minute as the Rockets' Kyia Kelly scored the equalizer on an unassisted goal. The match remained tied at 1-1 until late in the second half.

That was until the 69th minute, when the Rockets took advantage of a free kick opportunity just outside the box. Rose Hill's Paige Winter sent the ball in from the corner, which hit off the shoulder of Nevaeh Kelly and found the back of the net for the go-ahead score.

“Getting a quick lead was a great confidence boost for the team,” Roquemore said. “It affirmed what we already believed: that we can score on this team and compete with them. Rose Hill capitalized on a couple of our mistakes later in the game and we were unable to finish some of our opportunities, but the game could have gone either way. It was a tight matchup.”

The Wildcats did have a couple opportunities on goal late, including one in the final minute. Junior Faith Sewell sent a free kick into the box, the Rose Hill keeper dropped the ball, which left for an open net.

Harris had the ball at her foot, but the shot went just over the crossbar and Rose Hill held on for the win.



Louisburg senior defender Jaden Bentz heads the ball away on May 31 in Wichita.

Louisburg’s defense limited a powerful Rose Hill attack to just eight shots. Caroline Apple, Lila Edwards, Jaden Bentz, Rylee Moore and Sewell were all active on the back line, while

goalie Ally Brown had six saves on the day.

“Rose Hill has a really dynamic offense,” Roquemore said. “They are fast and move the ball really well. We focused on team defense with some special attention paid to a couple players. Jaden did an excellent job holding down one and played the same outstanding 1v1 defense that she has been doing all season.

“Our midfielders, primarily Rowan, Mena (Fercho) and Riley (May), did a great job with possessing much of the game in the midfield and shutting down many of their runs. We let them slip through the net once for the first goal and failed to stop and clear the ball from a corner kick for their second.”

Despite the loss, it was a special year for the Wildcat program. Louisburg ended the year with just three losses in the regular season, earned the No. 1 seed in the playoffs, and had the best program finish since 2021.



Louisburg junior Mena Fercho battles a Rose Hill player for a 50-50 ball during the third place match in Wichita.

"This was kind of a comeback season," Yows said. "We've had some really good talent throughout my years here but we never got far in postseason. I think this year we all meshed quick and we all just got each other. It was really something special.

"We were all confident in each other that we could go far as a team. I also think our results this season showed our level of skill throughout the whole roster. When we went into season everyone always thinks about post season, but I think we also did a good job going week by week and taking each game head on."

It also meant the end for five Wildcats seniors as Yows, Bentz, May, Brown and Baileigh Johnson all played their final game for the Wildcats.

"Getting to state was a big goal for us seniors this season since we've fallen a little shy in the past," Yows said. "While finishing fourth wasn't our goal, it still shows how much effort the team put in this season and it's still an impressive result. For me, it's a perfect way to close out my time here. I got to find success with some of my closest friends."

It also marked the end for Roquemore in his short tenure as the Wildcat head coach as he has stepped down after one season to move with his family for a different opportunity.

"Earning a spot in the Final Four, having an incredible record this season, and an outstanding goal differential were all really great accomplishments for this team," Roquemore said. "However, the one I am most proud of and the one I want to see continue is our team culture. This group of girls had a special bond and incredible chemistry on and off the field. There was growth, humor, positivity, a competitive spirit, and

a lot of joy playing this beautiful game. I would take all of that a hundred times over winning a state championship.”