

Louisburg Trailcats offer cycling option for area middle and high schoolers



The Louisburg Trailcats, coached by Elizabeth Ellis (center), is a middle and high school mountain bike team that competes in different races throughout the state.

Riding a bike is something a lot of kids grow up doing, and it is a pretty common site to see around a neighborhood.

What those kids or families may not know, is they have an opportunity to use that bike and compete and against other riders across the state of Kansas.

Two years ago, the Louisburg Trailcats were formed thanks to the efforts of Elizabeth Ellis, and her husband Chris. They started the team in 2022 as they competed in the Kansas chapter of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA).

They wanted to provide a different type of opportunity to the youth of Louisburg and so far it has been a success.

“It has been fantastic,” Elizabeth said. “It is great to see another sport option for kids in our area. To be on a team, but also complete individually is pretty empowering. We have had some pretty fantastic coaches and have provided great support.”

Elizabeth and Chris are two of five coaches on the team that includes Troy Buset, Galen Werth and Chris Zammit, and have worked with the current 9-member team.

The Trailcats is a Miami County based NICA mountain bike team for middle and high school age students. When the Ellis' heard about the Kansas chapter starting in 2020, they began the training it took to start their own program.

"That first year, we took the training to be coaches and we chickened out starting our own team," Elizabeth said. "We raced for a team out of Lawrence and we learned the first year.

"At the same time, we wanted to be a part of something that was closer to home and eventually took the leap and started a club here in Louisburg. Needless to say it has been a lot of fun."

The Kansas Interscholastic Cycling League was founded in 2019 as a non-profit (501(c)3) Emergent League of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA). They facilitate the development of high school and middle school teams/clubs for grades 6-12 and provide the education, training, licensing, and insurance for coaches and volunteers.

According to their website, they also produce high-quality mountain bike events and races that emphasize the value of participation, camaraderie, positive sporting behavior, and well-being over competition.



Logan Buset is one of several riders for the Louisburg Trailcats as they competed in five races earlier this year.

Elizabeth and her team has certainly saw a lot of success in 2022 and that continued this past season. This year, the Trailcats recorded five first-place finishes, five second-place honors, two third-place and one fourth and fifth-place finish.

The Trailcats competed in five different meets throughout the season that included Wilson State Park (Russell), Topeka, Lawrence, Fort Scott and Beloit.

“These courses are all different lengths, with different features,” Elizabeth said. “Courses were anywhere between two and four miles and you are trying to get as many laps as possible in the allotted time.

“We have definitely made a name for ourselves. We have a lot of eighth graders that will move to the freshman slot for next season. We turned a lot of heads I think. All the kids are competitive but having a great time. We have kids that are placing and doing really well and improving. They are also

making connections from all over the state.

Getting the program started wasn't always easy as it takes time to introduce a new sport to an area. However, for the Ellis' and the rest of the Trailcat coaches, it was time well spent.

"Cycling is a new concept in our area," Elizabeth said. "Not only are we coaching about the sport, but teaching the families about the culture that they never knew existed. That was the big challenge was just about slowly changing a mindset in the community."



Gracie Werth rides down a trail during a race earlier this year.

There are currently 10 teams across the state of Kansas and the sport continues to grow for those middle and high school riders. The season begins in mid February with practices and race weekends are held in April and May.

The team will travel out for pre-rides on Saturdays to get a layout of the course and then will compete Sunday.

The Trailcat team practices twice a week, whether in Louisburg or in surrounding areas. They are currently taking new team members

“Getting into the NICA, all they need is a safe bike to ride that is mechanically sound,” Elizabeth said. “I know not everyone may have a bike or a helmet, but we have had a youth that needed a support, and older cyclists in the community were generous and we have had bikes. If they don’t have a helmet and can’t afford one, we are going to make it happen to where they can compete.”

Ellis is looking forward to promoting the sport of cycling around the area and believes it can be something that is long lasting.

“This is a life-long sport as far as competitiveness goes,” Elizabeth said. “This is just one of those sports, even when your prime is in high school or college, there are competitive cyclists that competed well into their 30s or 40s. I think it is a good message to share, to be able to hop on a bike and exercise. Definitely a life-long sport.”

Members of the 2023 Trailcats are Logan Devenny, Logan Buset, Bryson Leslie, Titus Ellison, Preston Walton, Calvin Stuckey, Gracie Werth, Santiago Medina and Lucas Carlson.

If you have a child that is in grades 6-12 and wants to participate, contact the Trailcats through their Facebook or Instagram page. You can also contact Elizabeth Ellis at 620-224-6336.

Hendrickson excited to cheer at the next level at Missouri State



Louisburg's Jolie Hendrickson (middle) signed her letter of intent to cheer at Missouri State University this coming fall. Seated (from left) is her brother Johnny, her father Colby, her mother Elektra and her sister Ariel. Standing (from left) are former Louisburg coaches Angie Barber and Marissa Morrow.

Ever since Jolie Hendrickson picked up her first pair of pompoms, cheerleading was something she knew she wanted to do for a long time.

That included being able to cheer at the college level. Now, she is going to get that chance.

Hendrickson signed with Missouri State University earlier this spring and she is excited to have the opportunity to continue her cheer career.

"It was very fulfilling to be able to sign to cheer at the college level because it meant that I had stuck to my word and fulfilled my goals," Hendrickson said. "I have always wanted to cheer in college since I was in third grade, but senior year reality hit me and then I started pushing myself to practice for tryouts."

Trying to find the perfect fit for herself wasn't always easy, but when she took the visit to Missouri State, she found a

home that provided her with the opportunity to cheer at the Division I level.

Hendrickson will be on the sidelines for football, volleyball and basketball games and she is excited for it to get started.

“I could tell Missouri State was the right fit for me because the coaches and girls were very welcoming and supportive,” Hendrickson said. “It is hard to find that in the cheer world. Recently, our program got a new assistant coach. He is conditioning us like crazy to prepare us for the D-1 cheer intensity.”

Hendrickson had a lot of success with Louisburg cheer, including being a part of the state championship team her freshman season.

“I feel that my time with the Louisburg program helped me get ready for the college level by giving me the ability’s to adjust to work with anyone,” Hendrickson said. “The Louisburg cheer team helped develop my perseverance to attain my cheer goals.”

Even with all the success she experienced at high school, she knows college cheer is at a different level. However, Hendrickson is ready for the challenge.

“They said I am a good fit with my positive attitude and my drive to achieve our team goals,” Hendrickson said of her new team. “My goals once I get on campus is to keep up with the veteran cheerleaders. I am excited to work up to their level.”

Meet your 2023 LHS Prom Royalty Candidates



The 2023 Louisburg High School prom royalty candidates are (front row, from left) Ellie Davis, Brylee Diederich, Bree Gassman, Nova Ptacek; (back row) Matthew Sword, Nathan Apple, Corbin Hamman and Layne Ryals.

The Louisburg High School prom is right around the corner as the school will hold its annual event on Saturday, but there will be a new addition to its memorable day.

The school decided to feature prom royalty for the first time. Four male and female students were selected to be in the running for LHS Prom King and Queen. The candidates will be announced during the school's promenade walk-through at 4 on Saturday.

Pictures can be taken starting at 5 p.m. at First National Bank and then prom will be held at the Haven Event Space starting at 8 p.m. LHS post prom will be held from 12 to 3 a.m. at the high school.

Here are the prom candidates and their bios. Best of luck to all the candidates and hope everyone has a fun, safe prom weekend.



Bree Gassman and Corbin Hamman

Bree is the daughter of Brent and Tara Gassman. Bree has participated in soccer and cross country for four years, along with National Honor Society, Interact Club and basketball for two years. After graduation, Bree plans on attending Iowa Western Community College to continue her academic and athletic career, studying exercise science and playing soccer.

Corbin is the son of Rueben and Alison Hamman. Corbin has participated in baseball and FFA for four years, football and Interact Club for three years and National Honor Society for two years. After graduation, Corbin plans to attend Avila University to play baseball and study business management.



Nova Ptacek and Layne Ryals

Nova is the daughter of Russ and Erin Ptacek. Nova has participated in cross country and FFA for four years. She has also participated in soccer, track, Interact Club and National Honor Society for two years and International Club and FBLA for one year. Following graduation, Nova plans to attend the Colorado School of Mines to pursue a major in environmental engineering with a minor in humanitarian engineering.

Layne is the son of Jason Ryals and Janelle Ryals. Layne has participated in football for four years, Interact Club, track and basketball for three years, FBLA and National Honor Society for two years and golf for one year. Following graduation, Layne plans to attend Missouri S&T to play football and study mechanical engineering.



Ellie Davis and Matthew Sword

Ellie is the daughter of Lou and Vicky Davis. Ellie has participated in FFA for four years, National Honor Society for two years and volleyball, choir and track for one year. Following graduation, Ellie plans to attend Kansas State University to major in psychology, with the intent to obtain a PhD in specialized school or sports psychology.

Matthew is the son of Todd and Chris Sword. Matthew has participated in FFA and soccer for four years, National Honor Society for two years and girls soccer manager for one. Following graduation, Matthew plans to attend Kansas State University to study mechanical engineering or agricultural technology management.



Brylee Diederich and Nathan Apple

Brylee is the daughter of Derek and Jenny Diederich. Brylee has participated in volleyball for three years, Interact Club, FBLA, National Honor Society, softball and soccer for two years and basketball for one. Following graduation, Brylee plans to attend Northwest Missouri State University and major in elementary and special education.

Nathan is the son of Nathan and Cindy Apple. Nathan has participated in football, track, the musical, scholar's bowl and band for four years. He has also participated in jazz band for three years, debate, Interact Club, FBLA and National Honor Society for two years and wrestling for one. After graduation, Nathan plans to attend Missouri S&T to study chemical engineering and engineering management as well as run track.







Louisburg FBLA ready for state competition after strong district showing



Forty-eight students from Louisburg High School will attend the FBLA state convention this week in Topeka.

Attendance will be down at Louisburg High School towards the end of this week, but that is not a bad thing.

In fact, several Wildcat students will be making the trip to

Topeka on Wednesday for the FBLA State Convention after a strong showing at the district competition earlier this year.

Louisburg will send 48 students to the state event as several qualified in multiple events at the district competition in Pittsburg.

"This year was our first year to compete at an actual district leadership conference since the 2019-20 school year," Louisburg FBLA sponsor Adrienne Lane said. "It was a great experience for the students to be able to travel to an actual conference versus having a virtual one. They did great at districts and they all worked very hard to compete and place."

Louisburg earned 14 district titles during that competition, while the top 10 in each event or test qualified for a spot to compete at state.

It was a year's worth of preparation that led to a successful outing for the Wildcat program.

"The students spend a lot of time preparing the competition," Lane said. "We had work nights weekly leading up to the competition so the students could be prepared and ready to compete."

As much success as they had at districts, competition will ramp up this week at state in Topeka as several students will try to earn a spot at nationals. The top four in each event will qualify for the national competition in Atlanta in late June.

"(State) is a very big and competitive competition as chapters from all around the state of Kansas will be there," Lane said. "This year we had 48 students qualify to compete and I am very excited to see how we will do this year.."

District Awards 2023

First Place

William Hutsell- Accounting 2

Erin Apple- Advertising

Jackson Rooney, Kaitlyn Vest, Lindsay Keaton- Broadcast Journalism

Carson Wade- Business Calculations

Erin Apple- Business Communications

Nathan Apple- Cyber Security

Erin Apple- Economics

Carson Wade, Ethan Ptacek, Jerynce Brings-Plenty- Entrepreneurship

Brianna Messer Rylee Hickey, Sophie Katzer- Hospitality and Event Management

Erin Apple and Izzy Moreland- International Business

Sabra Brueggen, Ashlyn Kuhlman, Ally Brown- Intro to Social Media Strategy

Nathan Apple, Nathan Vincent- Management Information Systems

Emmett White- Personal Finance

Ethan Ptacek- Securities and Investments

Second Place

Carson Wade- Accounting 2

Izzy Moreland & Erin Apple- Banking and Financial

Layne Ryals, Jackson Rooney, Brock Varns- Business Management

Jenna Cauthon and Ashley Moreau- Data Analysis

Elizabth George and Maddie O'Keefe- Hospitality and Event Management

Jackson Rooney, Layne Ryals, Brock Varns- International Business

Julia Dover and Cricket McIntire- Intro to Business Presentation

Evan Moreland- Intro to Business Procedures

Presley Yows- Intro to Public Speaking

Sami Lane, Mackenzie Rooney and Elizabeth Rooney- Intro to Social Media Strategy

Nathan Apple- Networking Infrastructures

Adyson Ross, Brianne Kuhlman, Nathan Vincent- Social Media Strategies

Carson Wade, Ethan Ptacek, Jerynce Brings-Plenty- Sports and Entertainment Management

Third Place

Nathan Vincent- Advertising

Brianen Kuhlman, Adyson Ross, Alexis Hampton- Business Ethics

Blake Amren- Client Services

Nova Ptacek- Economics

Emmett White- Intro to Marketing Concepts

Julia Dover- Intro to Financial Math

Lindsay Keaton & Brylee Diederich- Marketing

Blake Amren- Personal Finance

Erin Apple- Political Science

Brianne Messer, Rylee Hickey, Kate Frederick- Publication Design

Elizabeth George & Maddie O'Keefe- Sales Presentation

Claire Brown- Supply Chain Management

Fourth Place

Julia Dover- Advertising

William Hutsell- Entrepreneurship

Jenna Cauton- Healthcare Administration

Elizabeth George- Help Desk

Evan Moreland- Intro to Information Technology

Josh Hotlzen & Emmett White- Marketing

Wyatt Holland, Sophie Katzer, Alexis Hampton- Sales Presentation

Fifth Place

Blake Amren- Business Communications

Alexis Hampton- Economics

Blake Amren- Impromptu Speaking

Sixth Place

Megan Quinn- Accounting 1

Brylee Diederich- Accounting 2

Elizabeth George and Maddie O'Keefe- Banking and Financial

Systems

Brianne Kuhlman, Bryles Diederich, Kaitlyn Vest- Business Management

Sami Lane- Intro to Business Communication

Josh Holtzen- Intro to Financial Math

Josh Holtzen- Personal Finance

Seventh Place

Bronwynn Williams- Accounting 1

Ethan Ptacek- Insurance and Risk Management

Adyson Ross- Journalism

Eighth Place

Nathan Vincent- Accounting 2

Sophie Katzer- Business Law

Rylee Hickey- Cyber Security

Madison Smith- Human Resource Management

Presley Yows- Job Interview

Ninth Place

Sophie Katzer- Accounting 1

Jacob Bentz- Agribusiness

Jerynce Brings-Plenty- Client Services

Ashley Moreau- Healthcare Administration

Jerynce Brings-Plenty- Impromptu Speaking

Evan Moreland- Intro to Business Concepts

Sabra Brueggen- Intro to Financial Math

Josh Holtzen- Job Interview

Bronwynn Williams- Political Science

Ayden McKain- Public Speaking

Tenth Place

Jordan Brown- Accounting 1

Ayden McKain- Cyber Security

Sami Lane and Megan Quinn- Graphic Design

Brooklyn Harmon- Job Interview

Ayden McKain- Securities and Investments

Claire Brown- Organizational Leadership

Meet your LHS 2023 Winter Homecoming Candidates



The 2023 Louisburg High School homecoming candidates are (front row, from left): Brianne Kuhlman, Dannah Knipp, Tehya Harvey, Ava Baker; (back row) Colyer Wingfield, Greyson Rasmussen, Nathan Vincent and Jase Hovey.

Homecoming week at Louisburg High School kicked off Monday and events are in full swing. With something going on every day this week, it will be a busy time for students. All of it is, of course, centered around the crowning of the 2023 winter king and queen. Eight students were selected as nominees and here are their names and profiles.

The crowning will take place on Friday during halftime of the Wildcat boys' basketball game with Ottawa. Tipoff for that game is set for approximately 7:30 p.m. Good luck to all the participants and make sure to come out on Friday to support both the Wildcat girls and boys basketball teams.



Brianne Kuhlman and Colyer

Wingfield

Brianne is the daughter of Brian and Holly Kuhlman. Brianne has played basketball and soccer for four years. She has been a member of FBLA for three years, along with volleyball, Interact Club, FCCLA and National Honor Society for two years. Following graduation, Brianne is currently undecided on where she plans to attend college, but plans to major in Biology and then go to veterinarian school.

Colyer is the son of Brent and Gayla Wingfield. Colyer has participated in basketball for four years and track and field for two years. After graduation, he plans to attend college and play basketball, but he is currently undecided.



Dannah Knipp and Greyson Rasmussen

Dannah is the daughter of Conrad and Kami Knipp. Dannah has participated in FFA and Jazzy Cats for four years and musical for three years. She has been a member of National Honor Society and Interact Club for two years, along with Forensics and International Relations for one year. After graduation, Dannah plans to attend K-State to study either Food Science or Biochemistry on a pre-med path to later apply to medical school at KU.

Greyson is the son of Mike and Mercedes Rasmussen. Greyson has participated in musical, choir and Forensics for four years, along with student council and Interact Club for three years. He has also participated in National Honor Society, AV Club, football and baseball for two years. Following graduation, Greyson plans to study film in college but is undecided on a university.



Tehya Harvey and Nathan Vincent

Tehya is the daughter of Chad and Lindsay Harvey. Tehya has

participated in soccer, basketball and choir for four years, along with student council and musical for three years. She has been the boys soccer manager and National Honor Society member for two years and participated in band and volleyball for one. After graduation, Tehya plans to attend the University of Kansas on the pre-med track and major in biology and minor in Spanish.

Nathan is the son of Steve and Debbie Vincent. Nathan has participated in football, track and field and FBLA for four years. He has also participated in basketball, National Honor Society and select choir for two years and student council for one year. Following graduation, Nathan plans to attend Iowa State University as a member of the track and field team and major in business.



Ava Baker and Jase Hovey

Ava is the daughter of Kyle and Stacy Baker. Ava has participated in basketball for two years and soccer for one year. Following graduation, Ava plans to attend Coffeyville Community College to play basketball and major in athletic training or physical therapy.

Jase is the son of Shane and Jodi Hovey. Jase has participated in football for four years and track and field for two years. After graduation, Jase plans to attend the University of South Dakota to continue his football and academic career.









Top 10 Louisburg Sports Stories of 2022



It was a successful, and eventful, 2022 for Louisburg High School athletics and for those who are connected to the Wildcat program.

This past year created a lot of school history for LHS and a few programs brought back state hardware.

Below are the top stories from 2022, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the writeup is the link to

the actual story from the event.

When putting the list together, I took a lot of things into account – whether it was team vs. individual, popularity of the sport, historical achievements and the interest it drew on the web site.

This year was a blast to cover and I am looking forward to seeing what 2023 will bring. Thank you to everyone for their support and can't wait for it all to begin again.



10. Louisburg golf qualifies for state

FORT SCOTT – As the scores were rolling in, the Louisburg golf team was a little worried.

The Wildcats were in jeopardy of not qualifying for state after a few of the golfers didn't have the scores they were hoping for in the Class 4A regional tournament in Fort Scott.

Chanute and Independence had already assured themselves of a spot, but the third place team was up in the air as the top

three teams automatically qualify for state.

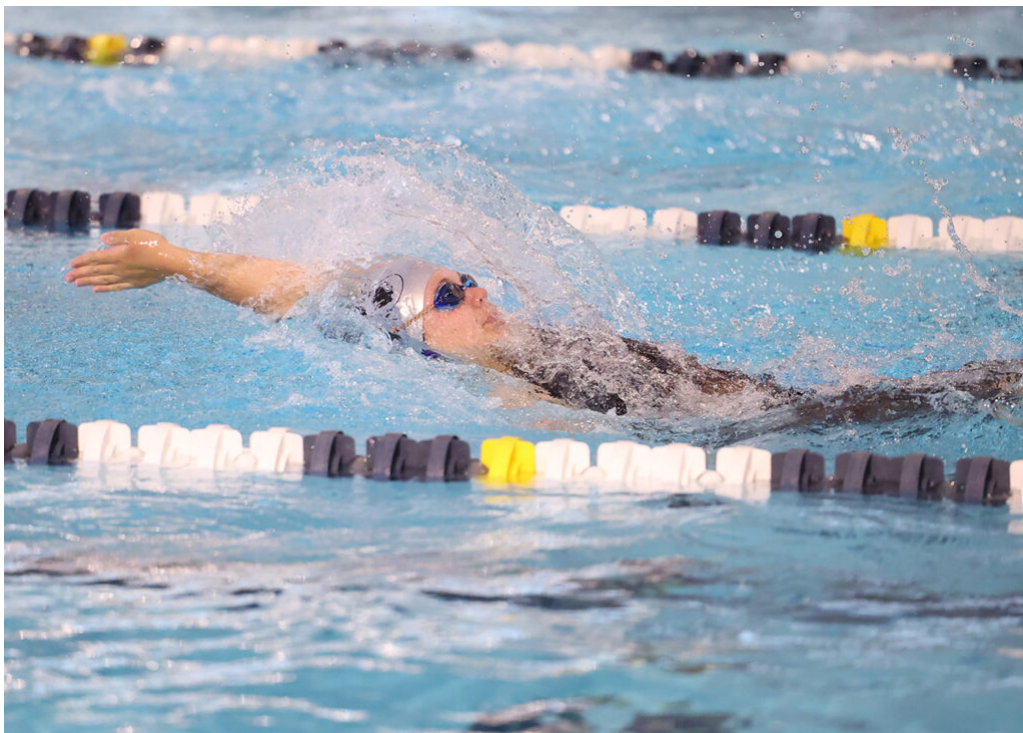
As it turned out, the Wildcats had nothing to worry about as they edged Paola by four strokes to finish in third with a 357 to secure their third consecutive spot in the 4A state tournament.

Seniors A.J. Arriola, Sam Wheeler, Ian Kirkpatrick, Johnny Thompson, along with juniors Jackson Olson and Nick Lancaster, advanced to the state tournament.

Arriola carded a 78 and finished as a regional runner-up, as he was just two strokes behind regional champion Drayton Cleaver of Chanute.

As for Olson, the Louisburg junior set a personal record by six strokes to shoot an 81 and took fourth overall. Those personal bests were enough to get the Wildcats into that third place spot.

At state, Arriola and Wheeler finished as the team's top two golfers. Arriola carded a 97 to take 59th overall, while Wheeler finished with a 98 and came in 66th.



9. Brueggen's earns school's first state swim medal

LENEXA – Even though she is just a freshman, Sabra Brueggen is already putting a stamp on her high school swim career at Louisburg High School.

It all came to a rousing end on May 21 as Brueggen earned her first state medal at the Class 5-1A Kansas State Swim and Diving Championships at the Shawnee Mission School District Aquatic Center.

Brueggen became the first swimmer in school history to earn a state medal as she finished fifth in the 100-yard backstroke in 1:00.58.

On the day before in the preliminaries, Brueggen also took fifth in a season-best time of 1:00.15.

“Medaling as freshman means the world to me, and it proves to me that all of my hard work for all of these years, has paid off,” Brueggen said. “I feel like I performed my absolute best at state, and I was very happy with the results. It gives me confidence that I will have a bright future representing OzPaLou at the state swim meets.”

She nearly had a second medal in the 50 freestyle. Brueggen put together a season-best time of 25.26 seconds, but finished ninth overall. It was the same finish she had the in the preliminaries.

The top eight in each event earn a state medal as she was just .06 away from earning another spot on the medal stand.



8. Harding takes over as Wildcat football coach

The Louisburg football program had a different leader on the sidelines this past season.

The USD 416 Board of Education approved the hire of LHS assistant coach Drew Harding to be the team's new head coach in January after the district decided not to renew the contact of former coach Robert Ebenstein.

Harding spent the last five seasons as a Wildcat assistant coach, including time as a defensive coordinator. He is a 2010 Louisburg graduate and was a big part of the Wildcat program during his time as a student-athlete at Louisburg High School.

However, Harding didn't see himself be a head coach of any sport coming out of college.

"It means a lot," Harding said. "When I got out of school, I didn't get into education right away and started somewhere else. I decided to get into education because of the impact my former coaches at Louisburg had on me. To come full circle and

to be in the position that I am in now, is pretty surreal. I am really excited for the opportunity and hopefully I can have the same type of impact on student athletes as they come through the program.”

Ebenstein has the been the head coach the last five seasons and helped the Wildcats to a 30-18 record during that time, including a Frontier League and regional title in 2018. He had a winning record three of those five seasons.

He was also named the KFCA Coach of the Year during that season and was selected to be an assistant coach for the Kansas Shrine Bowl. He was an assistant coach for the Wildcat program for five years before earning the head coaching job.



7. Conley resigns a Louisburg head boys and girls soccer coach

Louisburg High School head boys and girls soccer coach Kyle Conley stepped down from his position after seven years.

He was recently hired to lead the boys and girls soccer programs at Blue Valley West, where he will serve as the head coach of both teams.

Conley, who also taught social studies at LHS, informed the players and parents of his decision on May 4. The Blue Valley Board of Education approved his hire on May 9.

"Making the decision to leave Louisburg was extremely difficult," Conley said. "The players and parents, both past and present, made this decision tough. No parents or players caused this decision. I am very thankful to Mr. (Dave) Tappan and Mr. (Darin) Gagnebin for giving me this opportunity to coach and teach at Louisburg. The amount of support that my teams, my family and I received from Louisburg soccer parents and the community was incredible."

Bobby Bovaird was hired as the new boys head coach, while Ben York returned to the program as the new assistant. York was also named the girls head coach after serving 13 years as the boys head coach previous to Conley.

Conley has the been head girls coach at Louisburg since its inception in 2016 and has led that program to four consecutive state final fours.

Twice, the Wildcats made the state championship game and finished runner-up on both occasions. He has guided the program to an 82-34-3 record.

Conley took over the boys program in 2016 and finished with a 77-32-3 record. He led the Wildcats to two state final fours during that span, including a third place finish in 2020.

"I am so proud of the things that our student athletes in the soccer programs have accomplished both on and off the soccer field," Conley said. "I will always cherish the memories that we have made here with the Louisburg soccer programs."



6. Girls cross country qualifies for state, Vohs earns state medal

WAMEGO – For the second consecutive season, Emma Vohs left the Class 4A state cross country meet with more than was she arrived with.

Vohs earned her second state medal at Wamego Country Club as she finished 10th overall with a time of 20 minutes and 51 seconds. The Louisburg junior did what she set out to accomplish.

“I was so excited to win another state medal this season and couldn’t be happier that I reached my goal for that race, which was placing top 10,” Vohs said. “The race was a tougher course, as was the competition this year, but I am blessed to run with such talented girls that push me to do better each race.”

Vohs led the Lady Cat team that qualified for state for the sixth consecutive season. As a team, Louisburg finished eighth overall with 208 points.

A week earlier at regionals, the team of Vohs, Maddy Rhamy, Lola Edwards, Nova Ptacek, Bree Gassman, Erin Apple and Madison Huggins finished third to punch their ticket to state

“It never gets old seeing the joy in the team’s eyes when they hear they qualified for state,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “The girls work hard to accomplish this goal each year, and because of their dedication to their sport, they achieve great things even if they might not make it, but they did.

“The program has built itself and I’m just glad to be a part of it. Yes, we put together a training plan to accomplish great things at the end of the season, but the runners do the work to get there. It takes self discipline, motivation and guts to be there at the end of the season.”



5. Wildcat wrestling medals 3 at state

Louisburg wrestling has had its fair share of state medalists in its long history, but what the Wildcats accomplished in February at the Tony’s Pizza Events Center in Salina was something the program had never seen before.

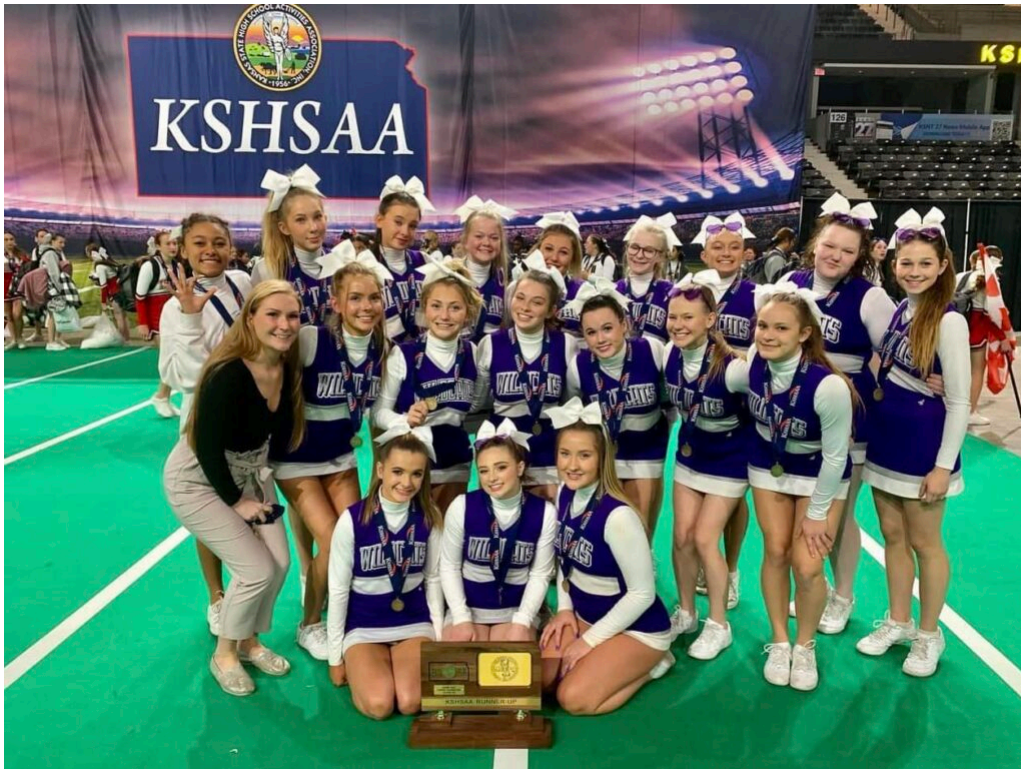
The Wildcats left the Class 4A state tournament with three state medalists, the most for one year in program history.

Aiden Barker (195 pounds), Kaven Bartlett (126) and Elijah Eslinger (285) each finished in the top six in their respective weight classes and put together their best performances of the season. It was also the first time each of them earned a state medal.

"This season was the most state placers we've had in a single year in program history," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Prior to 1992, KSHSAA only medaled the top 4 in each weight. In both 1988 and 1989, we had two top-4 placers and one top-6 placer, but this really shows how the program is progressing and developing. We nearly had four medalists, too."

Barker, a senior, was a favorite for a medal heading into Salina and finished fifth overall with a 13-1 major decision over Ottawa's Jared Ferguson in the fifth-place match.

Bartlett and Eslinger also left lasting impressions on the Wildcat program as each medaled sixth overall after both nearly turned their brackets upside down as they advanced to the semifinals on Friday. They both guaranteed themselves a medal on the first day.



4. Louisburg cheer earns state runner-up performance

TOPEKA – It has almost become commonplace to see the Louisburg High School cheer squad in the finals of the Class 4A Gameday Spirit Showcase.

However, that doesn't mean the cheerleaders are any less excited about it.

For the second straight season, the Wildcats finished as the state runner-up in the Class 4A competition at the Stormont-Vail Events Center. They finished with a score of 79.45 and were one point behind champion Paola.

It is the fourth straight season that the Wildcats have finished in the top three, which included a state championship in 2019.

"I am so unbelievably and incredibly proud of this team," Louisburg coach Marissa Morrow said. "This positivity and attitude that these girls have shown this year have been the

key to our success. I had no doubt that the material and performances we brought on Saturday had the potential to do well, but it was the girls who made it possible to pull it together. They were all such competitors and left it all out on the mat, and I couldn't ask for more. We also could not have done it without the support of our amazing cheer families."

Members of the team are Sydney Dudzik, Bella Feikert, Zoe Cutshaw, Caroline Dugger, Elizabeth George, Addison Drake, Brooklyn Harmon, Adison Vargo, Maddy Carpenter-Ross, Sienna Finch, Alayna Stohs, Alaina Dudzik, Maddie O'Keefe, Liz Willming, Kayleigh Ramsey, Taryn Osborn, Anna Brizendine and Jocelyn Burk.



3. LHS football secures Frontier League title

With just over a minute left in regulation, Louisburg was staring at the possibility of their first league loss and was

watching an outright Frontier League title slip away.

Spring Hill scored a touchdown and took a four-point lead with 1 minute and 12 seconds left. Things were looking bleak for the Wildcats.

As it turned out, 52 seconds was all the Wildcats needed to pull off one of the season's most memorable moments. Louisburg quarterback Declan Battle found junior Caden Caplinger in the endzone on an 18-yard touchdown pass with 20 seconds remaining to give the Wildcats a 20-17 victory.

The win was the Wildcats' seventh straight on the season and clinched the team's first Frontier League championship since 2018.

"There weren't a lot of people who thought we could be league champions," Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. "I don't think it was anything that people expected out of us, and the Frontier League is really good. For this group to come to work, get better every day and to see success is pretty sweet."

The win was extra special for 16 Louisburg seniors as they were also able to celebrate that league title on Senior Night.

Jackson Kush, Nathan Apple, Carson Wade, Isaiah Whitley, Riley Van Eaton, J.R. Rooney, Will Hutsell, Brayton Brueggen, Christian Golladay, Nathan Vincent, Jase Hovey, Mack Newell, Hunter Moore, Mason Dobbins, Corbin Hamman and Layne Ryals all got to end their final regular season home game with a win.

"The Frontier League title means so much to me and this team," Rooney said. "As a team before the season, the seniors wrote down our goals, and league champs was on everyone's list. To clinch it on senior night was amazing. Going undefeated at home, to win it on our field in front of our town – it was an indescribable feeling."



2. Wildcat volleyball finishes fourth at state

HUTCHINSON – The state tournament ended the way it started for the Louisburg volleyball team – with a loss to Towanda-Circle.

Still, it was everything that happened in between that made for a lot of lasting memories for the Wildcat players.

Louisburg went 2-1 in pool play at the Hutchinson Sports Arena, which included a revenge win over Tonganoxie in the final match of the day. That gave the Lady Cats a spot in the state semifinals Saturday, where they finished fourth in Class 4A.

The Wildcats suffered a 2-0 loss to both Bishop Miege and Circle, but they still ended their season as one of the state's top teams.

"I am extremely proud of this team," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "Looking at how we started this season, and our ups and downs along the way, it is a huge accomplishment for

them to have come together as a team at the end of the season and play our best volleyball yet. It was apparent in the last couple of weeks that they really started playing for each other and capitalizing on the strong team bonds they built throughout the year.”

It was all thanks to an upset the previous week. Louisburg defeated the state’s No. 1 seed, Baldwin, in the sub-state championship match to earn the state berth.

The Wildcats, the No. 9 seed, knocked off No. 1 seed Baldwin, 25-18 and 25-19, at Baldwin High School in the finals of the Class 4A sub-state tournament. That win puts Louisburg in the state tournament for the first time since 2019.

Members of the team are Emma Prettyman, Adyson Ross, Claire Brown, Allie Kennedy, Ashlyn Berck, Delaney Nelson, Izzy Moreland, Bronwynn Williams, Caileigh Kilgore, Megan Quinn, Hailey Sword and Madelyn Williams.



1. Wildcat boys take third at state

track; Koontz, Caplinger win state titles; Lady Cats medal nine

WICHITA – For the second consecutive season, the Louisburg boys track and field team brought home hardware from the Class 4A state meet.

After winning the state championship in 2021, the Wildcats once again found their way to the podium in Wichita as they finished third overall with 67 points.

Andale won the state championship with 101 points and Chanute was the state runner-up with 71.

Louisburg got points from a lot of different areas as the Wildcats medaled in 10 events and had 12 medalists overall, including all three of their relays.

Louisburg senior Tom Koontz won a pair of state titles in the hurdles, while sophomore Caden Caplinger captured the gold medal in the pole vault.



“I am not going to complain at all,” Koontz said. “I believe

we came here with less people than we did last year and everyone did their best. Even though we didn't get exactly what we wanted, third place is still a great achievement."

What he couldn't believe was he had just won his first state title in the 300 hurdles and Koontz did so by breaking a 14-year-old school record. Koontz ran a time of 38.98 seconds to break R.J. Saunders' record of 39.16 set in 2008 to earn the gold.

It turned out to be his second state title of the day as he also earned the gold medal in the 110-meter high hurdles with a time of 14.61 seconds. Koontz won the state in that event last season as well.

Caplinger cleared a lot of his marks in the pole vault and did so in convincing fashion as he was able to win a state title in just his second year with the program.



Last season at state, Caplinger medaled eighth after he cleared 12-6. A year later, the Louisburg sophomore improved his mark by two feet and is a state champion.

It was an impressive showing from Caplinger as he didn't miss an attempt until he tried for 15 feet at the end. He entered the competition at 12-6 and had five straight successful clearances.

"At first I was really nervous, but then it just kind of turned into a routine thing," Caplinger said. "I started going over heights consistently and the rest just kind of fell into place. I cleared 14-6 earlier this week twice in a row, so I knew I could do it. I was still a little nervous though."

As for the Lady Cats, Delaney Wright left the state meet with three medals. Wright, who has been coming back from a severe injury for most of the season, finished as the state runner-up in the 400-meter dash, third place in the 200 dash and fifth in the long jump.

A season ago, Wright was the state champion in all three events, but couldn't get the repeat she was hoping for.

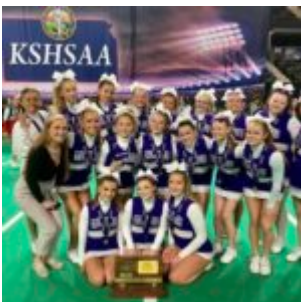


“Going into state I knew I still wasn’t where I want to be due to my injury a couple months ago,” Wright said. “But I wanted to attack it still and give it all I had. I am blessed I was there to compete and earn three medals cause in the beginning I didn’t even know if I was going to compete my senior year.”

In all, the Lady Cats put together a strong state performance as they medaled in nine events and finished with 40 team points and took sixth overall. They were just eight points away from the third place spot, and a plaque.

“Once again the state qualifiers did an amazing job,” Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. “They all performed well and most beyond expectations. To leave the meet finishing in sixth place was outstanding. We left with lots of medals and great memories.”

Wildcat cheer earns state runner-up for second straight season



Members of the state runner-up Louisburg cheer squad are (front row, from left) Sydney Dudzik, Bella Feikert, Zoe Cutshaw; (middle) coach Marissa Morrow, Caroline Dugger, Elizabeth George, Addison Drake, Brooklyn Harmon, Adison Vargo, Maddy Carpenter-Ross; (back row) Sienna Finch, Alayna

Stohs, Alaina Dudzik, Maddie O'Keefe, Liz Willming, Kayleigh Ramsey, Taryn Osborn, Anna Brizendine and Jocelyn Burk.

TOPEKA – It has almost become commonplace to see the Louisburg High School cheer squad in the finals of the Class 4A Gameday Spirit Showcase.

However, that doesn't mean the cheerleaders are any less excited about it.

For the second straight season, the Wildcats finished as the state runner-up in the Class 4A competition Saturday at the Stormont-Vail Events Center. They finished with a score of 79.45 and were one point behind champion Paola.

It is the fourth straight season that the Wildcats have finished in the top three, which included a state championship in 2019.

"I am so unbelievably and incredibly proud of this team," Louisburg coach Marissa Morrow said. "This positivity and attitude that these girls have shown this year have been the key to our success. I had no doubt that the material and performances we brought on Saturday had the potential to do well, but it was the girls who made it possible to pull it together. They were all such competitors and left it all out on the mat, and I couldn't ask for more. We also could not have done it without the support of our amazing cheer families."

It wasn't always a smooth ride for Louisburg as it stumbled a little to begin the competition. Although the Wildcats were in fourth place heading into the finals, there was a little uncertainty before the big announcement of earning a spot in the top six.

Louisburg had a 3-point deduction during their fight song performance due to the song length being two seconds over the limit.

"This was devastating to hear considering it was the same song/file that has been used the past four years with no deductions," Morrow said. "Three points in cheerleading is huge. Those points could be a make or break to go to finals or to win. After rallying together and everyone giving pep talks, we knew we had to make our third performance (the last before hearing finalists announced) the best we could just to be given the chance to prove ourselves in finals."

The Wildcats earned a stronger crowd leading score of 75.633, which gave them an overall score 182.600.

It was good enough to put them into the finals and Louisburg took full advantage.

Louisburg had the best crowd leading score in the finals, which helped the Wildcats earn their second consecutive state runner-up plaque.

"The girls blew me away with our cheer section and I was so hopeful to have a chance," Morrow said. "The cheerleaders and myself we ecstatic when we heard our name called to move on to finals. Once in finals, you have a clean slate and all previous scores do not matter. In crowd leading, all I can say is our Louisburg cheerleaders are loud and proud."

The Wildcats were led by three seniors this year in Bella Feikert, Sydney Dudzik and Zoe Cutshaw and all three have been a part of state success the last four years.

"They were essential in laying out the foundation for the program and our goals for this season," Morrow said of her seniors. "Their hard work and dedication to the team made this possible. The leadership skills that these girls radiate carries the team through all the positives and negatives that we could encounter, and I am really grateful and appreciative of them. It will definitely be sad to watch them leave."

With all of the state success the last four years, Louisburg

is considered one of the top cheer squads in the state and for good reason. The Wildcats have come home with a plaque every year since 2019.

“It is a remarkable achievement, especially for our seniors, to have won a title the last four years at our state competition,” Morrow said. “I have only been here for the last two of them and it was the wonderful Jayna Heriford the two years before me. I love knowing that Louisburg cheer is always ‘the one to beat’ or ‘the one to look out for’ for these other teams.

“I believe it is also such a confidence booster for our girls when we walk into the venue and it seems all eyes are on us or when teams stop what they are doing to watch us in our warm ups. I hope the legacy of LHS Cheer continues on for the years to come.”

The Louisburg cheerleaders that competed at the state competition are Bella Feikert, Addison Drake, Zoe Cutshaw, Sienna Finch, Anna Brizendine, Caroline Dugger, Maddy Carpenter-Ross, Madison O’Keefe, Alayna Stohs, Liz Willming, Sydney Dudzik, Brooklyn Harmon, Taryn Osborn, Jocelyn Burk, Adison Vargo, Kayleigh Ramsey, Alaina Dudzik and Elizabeth George.

Week 11 Athlete of the Week: Bella Feikert



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week eleven of the fall sports season, sponsored by Edward Jones-Craig Holtzen.

BELLA FEIKERT, SENIOR, CHEER

Louisburg senior Bella Feikert and the Louisburg cheer team continued their proud tradition Saturday during the Class 4A Gameday Spirit Showcase at the Stormont Vail Events Center in Topeka. Feikert and the Wildcats finished second in the state for the second consecutive year, just one point behind state champion Paola.

Feikert is one of three seniors on the squad and has been on the team all four years, including as a member of the state championship team her freshman season.

"Bella is an outstanding leader and motivator," Louisburg cheer coach Marissa Morrow said. "She makes efforts to join the whole team together as a family and goes out of her way to get to know younger or new team members. Her dedication is unmatched and I look forward to seeing her succeed in future endeavors. Bella is an amazing representation of not only Louisburg Cheer, but LHS in its entirety."

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday morning during the fall season and the winner is selected by Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.

Previous winners:

Week 1: Layne Ryals

Week 2: Nathan Vincent

Week 3: Emma Vohs

Week 4: Claire Brown

Week 5: Ashton Moore

Week 6: Colin McManigal

Week 7: Allie Kennedy

Week 8: Declan Battle

Week 9: Cade Gassman

Week 10: Riley Van Eaton



Meet the 2022 LHS Fall Homecoming Candidates



The Louisburg High School 2022 fall homecoming candidates are (from left): Bella Feikert, Sean McGuire, Emma Lohse, J.R. Rooney, Adyson Ross, Cade Gassman, Jolie Hendrickson and Mason Dobbins.

Homecoming week at Louisburg High School kicked off Monday and events are in full swing. With something going on every day this week, it will be a busy time for students. All of it is, of course, centered around the crowning of the 2022 fall king and queen. Eight students were selected as nominees and here are their names and profiles.

The crowning will take place on Friday before the Wildcats' home football game with Tonganoxie. Kickoff for that game is set for 7 p.m., with the introduction of the candidates and their parents at 6:30 p.m. Crowning will be at halftime. Good luck to all the participants and make sure to come out on Friday to support the Wildcat football team if you have the opportunity.



Bella Feikert and Sean McGuire

Bella Feikert

Bella is the daughter of Tim and Melody Feikert. Bella has participated in cheerleading, choir and theater arts for four years. She has been a member of National Honor Society for two years and FCCLA for one year.

Bella plans to attend college and double major, with one of those majors in theater arts and the other is undecided at this point.

Sean McGuire

Sean is the son of Sean and Lacey McGuire. He has participated in band and student council for four years. He has been in the AV Club for two years and track for one year.

After graduation, Sean plans to attend the University of Kansas and major in film production.



Emma Lohse and Jackson Rooney

Emma Lohse

Emma is the daughter of John and Sarah Lohse. She has participated in basketball for four years, track for two years and FCCLA for one.

Following graduation, Emma plans to attend college and run track and major in physical therapy. She also wants to minor in biology.

Jackson Rooney

Jackson is the son of Kendall and Nancy Rooney. He has participated in football for four years. Jackson has also participated in track and field, student council, FBLA and Interact Club for three years and National Honor Society for two.

Following graduation, Jackson is unsure of where he will attend college, but plans to pursue a degree in sports medicine and continue his athletic career.



Adyson Ross and Cade Gassman

Adyson Ross

Adyson is the daughter of Adam and Jillian Ross. Adyson has participated in volleyball, basketball and soccer for four years. She has been a member of FBLA for three years and Interact Club and National Honor Society for two years.

After graduation, Adyson plans to attend college but is unsure of her destination at this time.

Cade Gassman

Cade is the son of Brent and Tara Gassman. He has participated in soccer for four years, basketball for four years and forensics for one year.

Following graduation, Cade plans to attend college and play soccer, but is unsure of his destination at this time.



Mason Dobbins and Jolie Hendrickson

Jolie Hendrickson

Jolie is the daughter of Elektra Hendrickson and Colby Hendrickson. She has participated in cheer and soccer for three years. She has also been a member of National Honor Society and Interact Club for two years and debate for one year.

After graduation, Jolie plans to cheer in college and major in environmental science and minor in public health. She is undecided on which college to attend.

Mason Dobbins

Mason is the son of Amanda and Daniel Green. He has participated in football and track for four years, student

council for three years and basketball for two years.

Following graduation, Mason plans to attend college and compete in track and field.



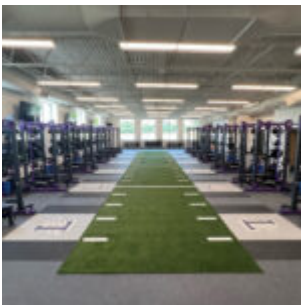








New improvements bring excitement to Louisburg athletics



The new weight room at Louisburg High School is one of several improvements the district made thanks to the passage of the bond. Improvements also included a new wrestling room, gymnasium floors and indoor batting cages.

Patrons of USD 416 had a chance to look at many of the new improvements made to Louisburg schools thanks to the passage

of the bond in late 2020.

For those that are fans of Louisburg High School athletics, that bond provided the Wildcat student athletes with several up-to-date amenities.

Students came back to school Tuesday and saw a brand new weight room, wrestling room and gymnasium floors in both the main and auxiliary gyms.

They are updates that were years in the making and ones many students will get to enjoy.

Improvements were also made to Louisburg Middle School and Broadmoor Elementary, along with a renovation of Circle Grove.

"I am so proud and privileged to be part of a district and community that supports projects such as the renovations at the high school to continue to provide the best opportunities for pre-K through twelfth grade students in Kansas," Louisburg assistant principal and activities director Michael Pickman said.

The new gym floors were put down over the summer and are lighter than the previous surface. Just off of the gymnasium, a multipurpose room was created, which includes the weights and wrestling additions.

Later in the year, new indoor batting cages for the baseball and softball teams will be added atop the mezzanine of the main gym. The high school cheer team will move to the old wrestling space and will use that area to practice.



Pictured is the Wildcat logo in the middle of the new gym floor in the high school.

"I am beyond excited at the renovations of the main and auxiliary gym floors and the addition of the multipurpose room for both our academics and activities at the high school," Pickman said. "The gym floors are brighter and graphics and colors updated to look more modern and brighter. From the community who get to watch events and request use of the spaces to the students and athletes who use the gyms daily, it shows the commitment we have to the quality and aesthetic of our facilities in the district.

"The pride it instills in our kids and community to the energy when in a brighter and updated space all benefit the academic focus and rigor and the competitive spirit in our activities. The new weight room and wrestling room in the multipurpose buildings simply have to be seen in person to appreciate, but it is a marvel of tax dollars spent well and for good purpose. More space means more availability to offer the weights courses and for creative use of the space."

Louisburg's new weight room is more than twice the size of the old space and allowed the school to replace equipment that was

decades old. It will also allow for more weight-centered classes.

The school acquired 12 Hammer Strength power racks, new bars and weights for each rack, new dumbbells, new bumper plates, a new exercise bike, along with landmine and glute/ham raise attachments on each rack.



The Louisburg logo is plastered in front of each rack, and the room also has a strip of artificial turf down the middle. TV screens are also included on each side of the room, along with a projector screen on the end.

LHS weights instructor Ty Pfannenstiel believes the weight room will provide a new excitement among the students and will provide a safer space to work.

“The new space also allows for us to get more students

enrolled in weights class,” Pfannenstiel said. “We have 12 new racks and can fit four athletes per rack, so we can have 48 kids in class. On any given school day, we can have up to 192 students moving through that weight room. You also have to remember that the weight room is being used year round.

“We run close to 200 kids through each day in the summer. There’s not a busier room in our school and it’s being used almost 365 a year. The layout of the new weight room makes it more functional. We no longer have kids trying to dodge each other when power cleaning. This new space is definitely a much safer environment.”



Not only will students see a benefit of the new weight room, but the athletic programs will see a renewed excitement as well.

“I think the new space is going to help coaches to get their kids to buy into strength training,” Pfannenstiel said. “We’ve already seen an increase in enrollment, because kids want to be in here. There are a couple of our sports programs that have close to 100 percent of their athletes enrolled in weights. We would be thrilled to see all of our programs get to those numbers. All of our athletes, no matter what sport

affiliation, can benefit from getting stronger, more explosive, and faster. There's not a better facility in the state of Kansas for that to happen than right here in Louisburg. I'm proud of our community for making the investment in our kids."

Wildcat wrestlers will also have a new home and their own room for the first time in school history. Most recently, the wrestlers practiced behind the bleachers atop the mezzanine of the main gym.



Now they have their own practice room that is big enough to hold two mats and also features projector and television screens.

"This new facility has been a long time coming, and I'm so excited for the chance to have a home of our own," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Not only do we have our own dedicated space, but it's an environment that's conducive to teaching the sport. For the past 12 years that I've been here, during wrestling season I put such a strain on my voice just to be heard during practice. We used to compete with all of the sounds from the gym after school – bouncing basketballs,

whistles, warm-up music for games, crowds, etc. There was never a door to close to shut out the noise or keep out spectators. Now, we've got a facility that not only looks amazing, but will also allow the coaching staffs for the high school, middle school, and youth club to be able to talk and teach."

Youth wrestling and middle school programs will also be able to use the facility and Bovaird hopes the new room will help continue to grow the sport of wrestling, especially as the school tries to build a girls wrestling program.

"The sport of wrestling in Louisburg has always had some amazing athletes, coaches, and supporters," Bovaird said. "This new practice room will be an outstanding addition to the program. We'll be able to keep our mats down year-round, which means our youth club can continue practicing after the high school season has ended. In the past, as soon as high school state was finished, the mats were rolled up and the batting cages in the old space came down, and we were pretty much homeless. As our youth wrestlers gear up for the end of their season, which goes into March and April, they now have a place where they can maximize their time – no more rolling out temporary mats on the other side of the gym, the aux gym, etc. Plus, we can now have our club offer spring freestyle and Greco-Roman practices, as well as fall practices for those who want to get on the mat.

"Having our own 'home' also means that we'll have the chance to instill more of a sense of responsibility in our athletes. This is our space, our room, so we're the ones who take care of it. I'm just so thankful to the community for supporting this part of the bond issue, and I'm so thankful to the administration. When I first came to Louisburg, I was told that a wrestling room was a part of the long-term vision for the district, and now it's come to fruition. What started with the USD 416 vision all those years ago is now here, and we're ready to show our gratitude."