

# Thank you, Louisburg!



*Getting to cover so many great kids was an honor for me, including these guys as they were generous enough to let me in their group picture.*

Eleven years ago, I was a nervous wreck.

I had just been laid off from my newspaper job, one where I had spent seven years covering Louisburg. Like so many others in this profession, I suddenly found myself staring at an uncertain future as newspapers continued to disappear. Jobs were scarce. Stability was gone. And I had a family to support.

I knew I was probably going to have to take a job I didn't want – something far from journalism – just to make ends meet.

Then an idea hit me.

With news media shifting more and more online, I wondered: *Would Louisburg support something like this?* Would the community care enough about local sports to follow an independent site dedicated solely to their athletes?

As it turned out, the answer was an overwhelming yes.

Because of the relationships I had built during my first seven years here, there was an appetite from local businesses to support the idea – and many of them never wavered. Eleven years later, a lot of those same businesses were still standing beside Louisburg Sports Zone, believing it was an important piece of the community.

They were right – and I couldn't agree more.

This past decade-plus has been some of the best years of my life. Through Louisburg Sports Zone, I formed incredible relationships with coaches, athletes, administrators, parents and community members. Even as a graduate of rival Paola, the Louisburg community adopted me as one of their own.

For those of you around my age or older, this might resonate.

I often felt like *Norm* from *Cheers*.

Every time I walked into a gym, stadium or field, I'd hear, "Hey Andy!" or "Thanks for coming!" or "We appreciate you." So many people knew my name – even people I didn't know – simply because they appreciated what I did.

Instead of an icy cold glass in my hand, I carried a camera. My barstool wasn't at a counter – it was on the sideline, capturing moments as they happened. And there were plenty of them.

State championships. State tournament appearances. Individual champions and medalists. Record-breaking performances.

I was lucky enough to see it all.

But my favorite part was always watching kids grow – seeing freshmen mature into seniors and leave as confident, capable young adults. That transformation never got old.

My very first event as Louisburg Sports Zone was a home basketball game. I was only a couple months removed from being laid off and still unsure if this idea would work or if anyone would even care.

Those worries disappeared quickly.

As I walked into the gym, Natalie Moore, Kirstin Lowry and Kallie O'Keefe stopped their warmups to smile and wave. Coach Shawn Lowry walked clear across the court to shake my hand and welcome me back.

More than a decade later, I still get those same smiles from athletes and handshakes from coaches and parents alike. Those connections are what made this decision so difficult.



***Was fortunate to interview so many student athletes these last 11 years.***

Six months ago, I was offered a position with KSHSAA Covered and the Kansas High School Activities Association. Honestly, I

never thought I'd have another writing job outside of Louisburg Sports Zone. I fully intended to keep doing this until the appetite for it simply wasn't there anymore.

But the opportunity was too good to pass up – and it was the right move for my family.

I knew the connections wouldn't be the same. Starting over is hard, especially when you know what you're leaving behind. My favorite part of this job was feeling the appreciation from the community and knowing I was giving people something positive to read.

I wasn't perfect. I made mistakes along the way. But this community allowed me to grow – as a writer, photographer and a person. I always tried to do the best I could and to cover every sport as fairly and equally as possible.

The last five or six years put me in an interesting position, as my own kids were playing varsity sports. How do you balance being a supportive dad and a journalist at the same time? I hope I did it right.

One of the biggest perks of this job was getting to write about my kids – their first varsity goal, first basket, first shutout or a big volleyball performance. I know how lucky I was to experience that.

None of this would have been possible without my family – especially my wife, Jennifer. I wasn't home much in the evenings, especially with young kids, and that wasn't easy. She never stopped supporting me.



***It was awesome to have my family with me as I was surprised with Louisburg Citizen of the Year a few years ago.***

To my kids – Jordan, Ally and Carter – thank you for understanding the crazy hours and for supporting me even when

I couldn't be at everything like other parents. I love you more than you know.

I also want to thank all of my advertisers, past and present. Louisburg Sports Zone doesn't exist without you. Craig Holtzen and Edward Jones, Dixon Contracting Services, White's Automotive, Prime Accounting Services, Amborn Stone, Wildcat Vet Clinic, Dr. Andy Hill, Destination Fun Travel, Vance Brothers, Go Brolly, First National Bank, First Option Bank, Landmark Bank, Dr. Laura's Orthodontics, IronHorse Family and Cosmetic Dentistry, Louisburg Family Dental, Vohs Pharmacy, Elliott Insurance, Magnum Equipment, Louisburg Athletic Club, Louisburg Library, Tri-County Pest, Midwest Collision – and so many others along the way.

I also wanted to give a big shoutout to a Louisburg graduate – Kenneth Sweeney. He has been my “web guy” this whole time. He helped design the site and has also been there to help me troubleshoot what problems have come up since then. I couldn't have done it without him.

Thank you to every coach I've worked with. Getting to know you and promote your programs has truly been an honor. I appreciate you enduring my countless emails that I send out every week. You have helped make Louisburg Sports Zone what it is as well. I will miss you all.

And finally, the student-athletes – you are the reason this worked. Thank you for letting me into your lives and giving me so many incredible stories to tell. And consider this a long-overdue apology to anyone I ever did “dirty” with an unfortunate action photo.

So here I am, 11 years later, feeling some of those same nerves as I move into something new. The last six months with KSHSAA Covered have been great, and I've been welcomed with open arms.

Still, walking away from something I built was not easy.

I only hope that Louisburg Sports Zone has been as much of a blessing to you as it has been to me. These have been some of the best times of my life – and I will treasure them always.

Thank you, Louisburg.

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## **Q&A: Information on vote for potential baseball/softball fields**



Voters in the Louisburg school district will head to the polls Nov. 4 to decide whether to approve a bond measure that would fund the construction of new baseball and softball fields for Louisburg High School. The proposal has generated plenty of discussion in the community, with supporters citing the need for modern, on-campus facilities and opponents raising questions about costs and priorities.

On the ballot is a vote for new multipurpose baseball and softball fields. USD 416 is proposing to add two new multipurpose fields to the existing infrastructure and upgrade

the two current fields.

To learn more about what's at stake, Louisburg Sports Zone spoke with Superintendent Dr. Brian Biermann (BB), school board member Jo Erin Stuterville (JS), and head baseball coach Kade Larson (KL) about the details of the project, why it's being proposed, and what it could mean for students and the community moving forward.

### **LSZ: What Does This Project Entail?**

**JS:** Two new fields will be added between the high school and middle school. Upgrades will also be made to the current practice fields south of Wildcat Drive, transforming them into competition fields for JV games with dugouts, bleachers, and ADA accessibility.

The varsity fields will be equipped with low-impact sports lighting that directs all light onto the field to reduce any impact on nearby residents. The two new fields will be fully turfed, while the two JV fields will remain natural grass surfaces.

As an effort to keep the project cost as low as possible, this plan allows use of the current parking lots at the middle school as well as the high school staff parking lot. Restrooms and concessions in the middle school will be utilized, eliminating the need for additional electrical or plumbing costs since these facilities are already in place.

### **LSZ: How Will These Fields Benefit the Community?**

**KL:** These multipurpose fields will serve far more than just the LHS baseball and softball teams.

The LHS Band and Dance Team are especially excited about the new turf space, which will give them a consistent, dry, and level surface for practice – no more dodging soggy, uneven grass or walking to the stadium and wasting valuable practice

time.

The PE Departments at both LHS and LMS will also benefit, as every student from sixth through ninth grade will have access to these fields during physical education classes. The middle school and high school football teams can use the space for practices when the stadium is occupied by other events.

The fields can also be utilized for LRC sports, providing additional space for baseball and tee-ball games, as well as opportunities to mark temporary lines in the outfields for soccer, flag football, and other community sports.

Currently, the LHS baseball and softball teams practice at the fields south of Wildcat Drive and play their home games at Lewis-Young Park. The new fields would allow teams to practice and compete in the same location. Presently, baseball doubleheaders require splitting coaching staff because JV and varsity cannot play simultaneously at Lewis-Young.

Additionally, the current practice fields often become unplayable for days at a time due to rain, forcing teams indoors. The lack of shelter at Lewis-Young also poses safety concerns during sudden storms. Bussing students back and forth adds another logistical challenge and cost.

### **LSZ: How Will This Be Funded?**

**JS:** USD 416 will enter into a 10-year lease-purchase agreement to fund the project, with payments made through the Capital Outlay Fund. The district secured a highly competitive interest rate of 4.24 percent, with no prepayment penalty, and has applied for grants to help offset costs. The district anticipates paying off the loan in as little as seven years, which would reduce overall interest expense.

### **LSZ: Why Is Now a Good Time to Take On This Project?**

**BB:** This project will be funded with no increase to the mill rate – meaning property taxes will not rise because of it. The Board of Education understands concerns about rising taxes and has created a fiscal plan to fund the project using the existing 8-mill Capital Outlay Fund, which cannot legally be increased beyond 8 mills.

**LSZ: Why Turf Instead of Natural Grass for the Two Varsity Fields?**

**JS:** Simply put, turf allows for maximum usage. As long as it's not raining or storming, the fields can be used.

Financially, turf makes long-term sense. The district installed turf at the football stadium in 2019, covering about 96,000 square feet. That field costs approximately \$2,500 per year to maintain. If it had remained grass, maintenance would run closer to \$35,000 per year for mowing, fertilizing, watering, spraying, and general upkeep.

The two new turf fields will cover about 160,000 square feet (1.67 times larger) at a cost of just over \$700,000. With a minimum 15-year life expectancy and a full 8-year warranty, the investment is sound. Maintenance and insurance combined are estimated at \$6,000 per year, roughly equal to what the district currently spends maintaining that same area in its existing condition.

**LSZ: Why Not Upgrade the Fields at Lewis-Young Park Instead?**

**BB:** There are several issues with that option. First is ownership – The Lewis-Young fields are owned by the City of Louisburg. Roughly half of the USD 416 tax base resides outside city limits, meaning district funds would be used to upgrade city-owned property.

Second, there are legal restrictions – The Kansas Attorney General has stated that school districts cannot use Capital

Outlay Funds to improve facilities they do not own.

Third, is a bond limitation. The only way to use district funds at Lewis-Young would be through a bond issue, which would increase the mill levy for all citizens.

### **Who Can Vote on This?**

**KL:** Anyone residing within the USD 416 District is eligible to vote – it is not limited to Louisburg city residents.

A “Yes” vote on November 4th will allow the district to move forward with building these multipurpose baseball and softball fields and upgrading the existing fields south of Wildcat Drive.

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**Schultz excited to join Rockhurst University baseball program**



*Louisburg's Luke Schultz slides into home during a game last season. Schultz signed with Rockhurst University earlier this year.*

Baseball has been a big part of Luke Schultz's life ever since he can remember, so it is only fitting that baseball and Schultz continue their journey together into the college ranks.

Schultz, a 2025 Louisburg graduate, always wanted to be able to play baseball in college and his love for the game came full circle when he signed his letter of intent earlier this year to play for Rockhurst University.

"It has always been dream of mine to play college baseball," Schultz said. "It has been amazing seeing my dreams come to reality. I have been playing baseball since kindergarten and it has had such a major impact on my life. It has shaped me into the person I am today."

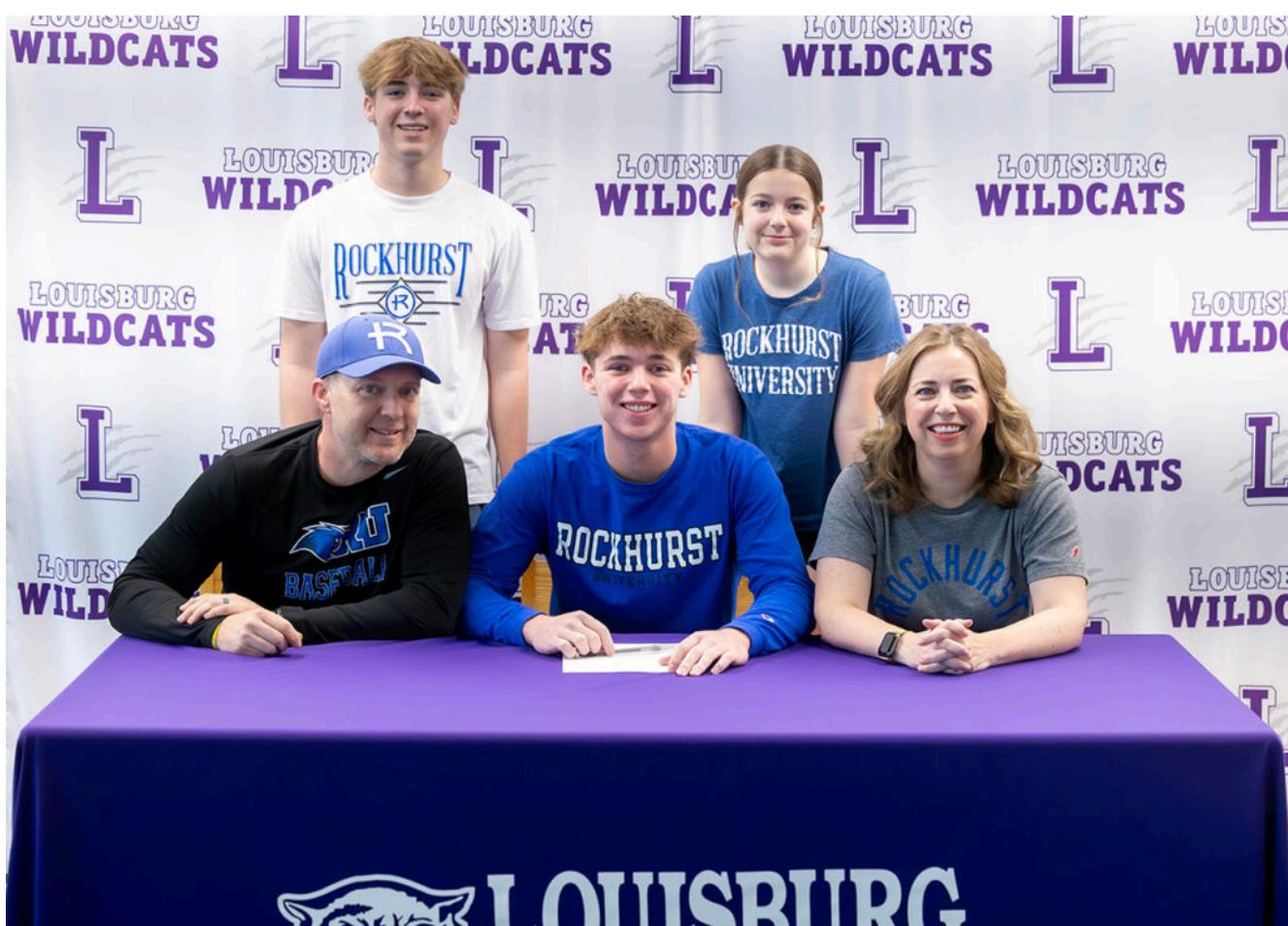
At Rockhurst, Schultz joins a Hawks program that competes in

NCAA Division II as part of the Great Lakes Valley Conference (GLVC). Known for its strong academics and athletic tradition, Rockhurst offers Schultz a chance to grow both as a student and an athlete close to home.

Schultz also got a chance to know Rockhurst coach Gary Burns, who has led the Hawk baseball program since 1994.

"What made Rockhurst stick out was their academics and Coach Burns," Schultz said. "He made it seem like he cares about each individual player on the team. Choosing Rockhurst was an easy decision for me. It seemed to fit everything I would want in a college."

It was a big final season of high school baseball for Schultz who racked up several postseason honors. He earned first team All-Frontier League and all-state honors and was selected to play in the KABC All-Star Game, where he had a bases loaded double to break open the game.



*Louisburg's Luke Schultz signed his letter of intent to join the Rockhurst University baseball program. Sitting next to Luke are his parents Nick and Leslie. Standing are his siblings Blake and Lainie.*

Schultz led the Wildcats in several offensive categories. He was first on the team with a .453 average on the year and a 1.249 OPS.

He recorded team-highs in hits (39), runs (31), RBIs (28) and doubles (14). He was second on the team with three home runs. Schultz also set a program record for doubles in a season.

As he had one of the most feared bats in the Frontier League, Schultz hopes he can take that momentum with him to the college level.

"The Rockhurst coaches see me having a chance to play as a freshman," They are trying to find a way to fit my bat into the lineup anyway they can. This high school season gave me confidence that will definitely carry over to next year."

No matter what role he plays, Schultz is ready to help a Rockhurst team that he believes will help him grow in the game.

"My expectations are to just enjoy it as much as I can and play to the best of my ability," Schultz said. "My goal is to contribute anyway I can to help my team succeed. I am so eager for what next season holds for me."

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**Schultz, Barbour, Amren**

# earned KABC all-state honors

2025 POSTSEASON BASEBALL HONORS



First Team - Middle Inf. LUKE SCHULTZ

Second Team - 3rd Base BRISTOL BARBOUR

Hon. Mention - Outfield MAX AMREN

**CLASS 4A ALL-STATE TEAM**

Three Wildcats earn all-state honors

DIXON CONTRACTING SERVICES

*Louisburg's Luke Schultz, Bristol Barbour and Max Amren were all-state selections by the Kansas Association of Baseball Coaches.*

Postseason honors continue to roll in for the Louisburg baseball team after the Wildcats finished their season with an 18-7 record.

After earning 10 selections on the All-Frontier League team earlier this month, the Wildcats were awarded three spots on the Kansas Association of Baseball Coache all-state team.

Senior Luke Schultz earned first team honors, while junior Bristol Barbour was a second-team selection. Sophomore Max Amren was named to the honorable mention team.

Schultz was recognized with first team middle infield honors after leading the Wildcats in several offensive categories. He was first on the team with a .453 average on the year and a 1.249 OPS.

He also recorded team-highs in hits (39), runs (31), RBIs (28) and doubles (14). Schultz was second on the team with three home runs.

The Louisburg senior also received another big honor from the Kansas coaches as he was selected to play in the KABC All-Star Game in Wichita on June 18.

Schultz was a big part in the Navy's 8-7 victory as he recorded a 2-run double in the sixth inning to give his team a 7-4 lead at the time.

As for Barbour, he was one of the team's top hitters, along with Schultz. He was named as to the Class 4A second team at third base.

Barbour had a .442 average to go along with a 1.210 OPS.

Barbour also recorded a team-high four home runs to go along with 34 hits, seven doubles and 27 RBIs.

Amren, who was named as an honorable mention outfielder, started the season on the bench, but quickly became one of the Wildcats' top hitters and outfielders. He eventually batted leadoff for most of the season.

He finished the year with a .403 average and a 1.052 OPS. Amren also had 29 hits, four doubles, two triples and scored 24 runs.

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## **Wildcat baseball earns 10 spots on all-league team**

2025 POSTSEASON BASEBALL HONORS



## ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE FIRST TEAM

Four Wildcats earn first team honors



**Louisburg seniors Luke Schultz, Meade Rutherford, Jayce Toms and sophomore Max Amren all earned All-Frontier League first team honors.**

The Louisburg baseball team put together another strong season and one that ended just one victory away from another state tournament berth.

Coaches from around the Frontier League took notice as several Wildcats were honored with postseason awards.

Louisburg earned 10 spots on the All-Frontier League team, including four first-team selections. Luke Schultz (infield), Meade Rutherford (pitcher), Jayce Toms (DH/Utility) and Max Amren (outfield) were all named to the first team.

"We had a really solid team this year," Louisburg coach Kade Larson said. "I feel like we were represented really well. This league is really tough and felt the coaches agreed we had some great players on our team."

It started with Schultz, who earned first team honors after leading the Wildcats in several offensive categories. He was first on the team with a .453 average on the year and a 1.249 OPS.

Schultz, a senior, also recorded team-highs in hits (39), runs (31), RBIs (28) and doubles (14). He was second on the team with three home runs.

"Luke was great for us this season," Larson said. "He was one of the most feared bats in the league and did a great job for us all season. He had some key hits down the stretch, especially in the regional games."

Rutherford served as the Wildcats' top arm this past season. He started nine games and posted a 4-2 record.

The Louisburg senior gave up just 13 earned runs in the nine starts with an earned run average of 2.53. He also struck out 46 batters on the year.

Rutherford was also named as an honorable mention outfielder as he was the team's starting centerfielder. He posted a .333 average with a 1.045 OPS, three home runs and 18 RBIs.

"Meade was really good on the mound for us this year," Larson said. "He threw a ton of strikes and let his defense work."

Toms, another senior, was also another big bat in the Wildcat lineup as he served most of the season as the team's designated hitter. He had a .356 average and a 1.048 OPS with 21 hits and 19 RBIs.

"Jayce was a great bat in our lineup all season," Larson said. "He had some really clutch hits for us to keep us rolling."

Amren, a sophomore, started the season on the bench, but quickly became one of the Wildcats' top hitters and outfielder. He eventually batted leadoff for most of the season.

He finished the year with a .403 average and a 1.052 OPS. Amren also had 29 hits, four doubles, two triples and scored 24 runs.

"Max stepped up in a big way for us," Larson said. "He was a great leadoff and did well getting on base and hitting the ball hard all season."



Juniors Danny Napier (catcher) and Bristol Barbour (infield) earned second team all-league honors, while seniors Rylan Carty (infield), Alex Saad (pitcher) and junior Christian Owens (pitcher) were honorable mention selections.

Napier had to miss part of the season due to a hand injury, but had a good season up until that point. He finished with a .367 average in 16 games, a 1.029 OPS, 18 hits, two home runs and 12 RBIs.

"Danny was a great catcher for us this season," Larson said. "He also hit the ball really well and found a way on base for us."

As for Barbour, he was also strong bat in the middle of the order for Louisburg. He had a .442 average to go along with a 1.210 OPS.

Barbour also recorded a team-high four home runs to go along with 34 hits, seven doubles and 27 RBIs.

"Bristol was consistent in the field and at the plate for us," Larson said. "He did a great job of making plays for us and also finding a way on base for us. He had some really clutch hits this season especially the one that kept us alive in the regional."

Saad and Owens were two of the team's top pitchers in strikeouts this season. Owens led the team with 53 strikeouts on the year and gave up just 15 hits and four earned runs in 29 innings of work to go along with a 4-0 record.

As for Saad, he pitched 37 innings and ended the year with 46 strikeouts and had a 3.56 earned run average in eight starts.

"Christian and Alex were great for us on the bump this season," Larson said. "Both had great seasons and did really well giving our offense a chance to go win."

Carty, the team's starting shortstop, had his best season as a Wildcat with a .371 average and a 1.105 OPS. He also had 26 hits, 10 doubles, two home runs and 16 RBIs.

"Rylan did well finding the barrel a ton this season," Larson said. "He was consistent in the field and did whatever the team needed him to at the plate."

## **ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE BASEBALL**

### **FIRST TEAM**

**CATCHER:** Hunter Hall, Spring Hill, junior

**PITCHER:** David Mercer, Paola, senior; Merek Davenport, Tonganoxie, junior; Meade Rutherford, Louisburg, senior

**INFIELD:** Luke Schultz, Louisburg, senior; Carter Hepner, Ottawa, senior; JD Troutman, Paola, senior; Keaton Neal, Spring Hill, junior

**OUTFIELD:** Colton Scott, Spring Hill, junior; Blake Costlow,

Paola, sophomore; Max Amren, Louisburg, sophomore

DH/UTILITY: Jayce Toms, Louisburg, senior

## **SECOND TEAM**

CATCHER: Danny Napier, Louisburg, junior

PITCHER: Hunter Loethen, Paola, senior; Brayden Decker, Eudora, sophomore; Jordan Miller, Spring Hill, junior

INFIELD: Eden Myers, Bonner Springs, senior; Bristol Barbour, Louisburg, junior; Brock Gibbs, Tonganoxie, senior; Brett Davidson, Baldwin, senior

OUTFIELD: Kaiser Namizato, Baldwin, senior; Xander Meinig, Paola, senior; Bodee Maslak, Tonganoxie, freshman

DH/UTILITY: Xavier Raygoza, Bonner Springs, senior

## **HONORABLE MENTION**

CATCHER: Jagger Day, Baldwin, senior; Braeden Vandonge, Eudora, senior; Gavin Seaton, Ottawa, sophomore; Roman Barnes, Paola, senior; Baron Dohm, Tonganoxie, junior

PITCHER: Will Altic, Ottawa, junior; Kaiser Namizato, Baldwin, senior; Khristian Sanchez, Bonner Springs, junior; Christian Owens, Louisburg, junior; Caleb Hepner, Ottawa, senior; Ramey Krokstrom, Spring Hill, senior; Alex Saad, Louisburg, senior

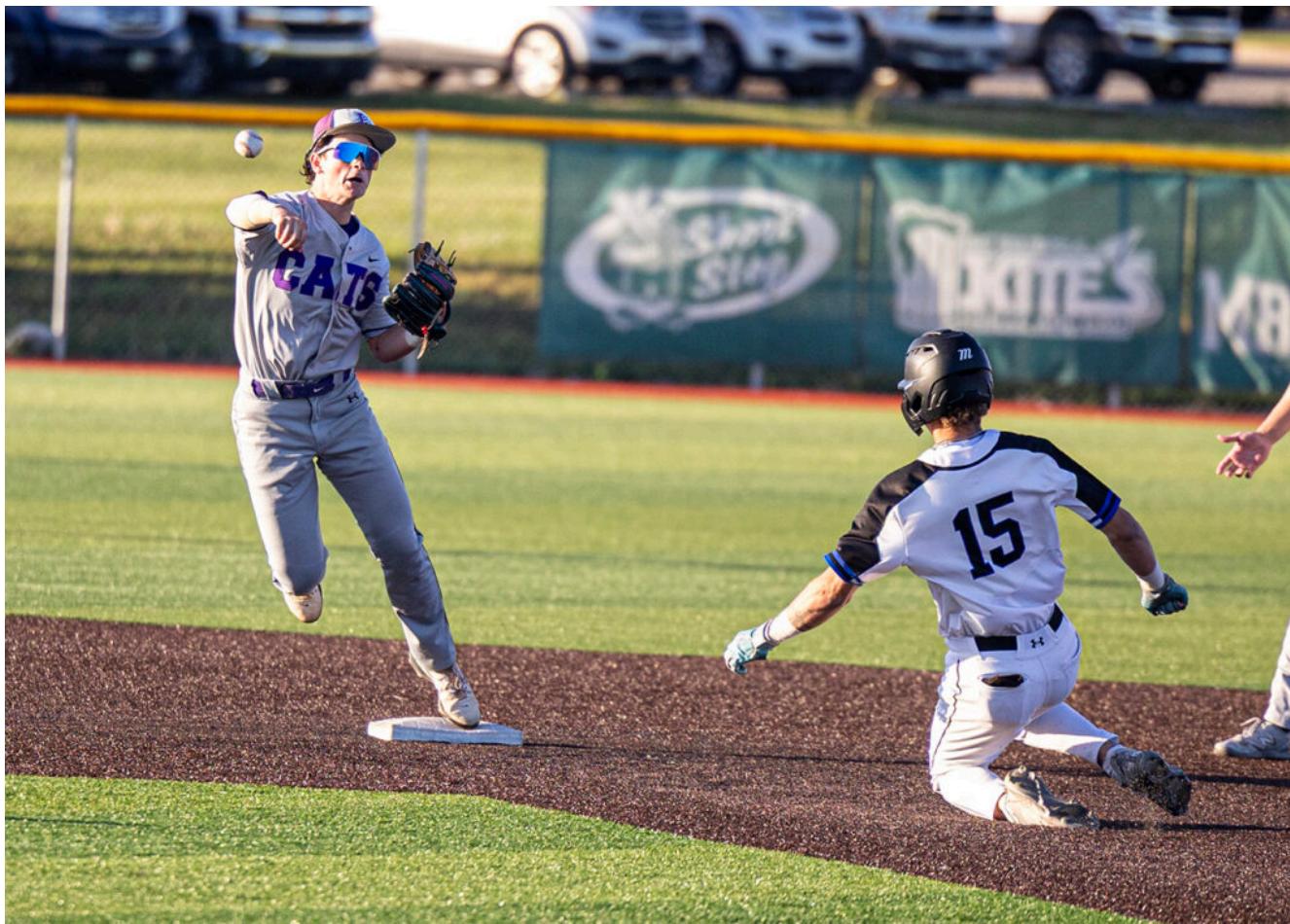
INFIELD: Caden Stedry, Eudora, senior; Rylan Carty, Louisburg, senior; Hunter Loethen, Paola, senior; Jace Kerley, Paola, senior; Benny Ragan, Spring Hill, junior; Ryder Nigh, Baldwin, senior; Brock Fish, Bonner Springs, senior; Jasper Logan, Paola, senior

OUTFIELD: Boston Bloomer, Ottawa, senior; Jacob Morenz, Tonganoxie, junior; Cole McGrath, Ottawa, senior; Jordan Miller, Spring Hill, junior; Meade Rutherford, Louisburg, senior

DH/UTILITY: Ashton McCurdy, Ottawa, senior; Sam Harris, Spring Hill, sophomore

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## Magic runs out for Wildcats in regional title game loss to Rock Creek



***Louisburg shortstop Rylan Carty turns a double play against Rock Creek on May 20 at Rock Creek High School.***

ST. GEORGE – There was simply not enough magic left for the Louisburg baseball team.

After pulling off a memorable comeback against Ottawa in the regional semifinals, there was no comeback to be had in the

championship game against Rock Creek on May 20.

Rock Creek, the defending state champion, scored three runs and handed Louisburg a 3-0 loss at Rock Creek High School as the Wildcats fell one win short of the state tournament.

"Obviously we didn't reach our final goal but we did really great things this year," Louisburg coach Kade Larson said. "We grew as a team and always gave ourselves a chance going into the seventh inning. I'm really proud of this group and loved the way they competed. These seniors did a great job of leading and helping the sophomores/juniors learn how to be the next group of leaders."

Giving themselves a chance was exactly what the Wildcats did in their regional semifinal game against Ottawa.

The Cyclones took a 4-0 lead into the bottom of the seventh and the Wildcats were two outs away from elimination. Louisburg could get nothing going offensively – then all of a sudden – everything went its way.

Louisburg scored five unanswered runs to pull off a 5-4 victory over Ottawa to advance to the regional championship

"The guys did a great job of competing and giving themselves a chance," Larson said. "They never gave up. We really couldn't get much going offensively for most of the game against Ottawa. Their pitcher threw really well for 6 innings.

"In the seventh, the guys did a great job of trying to keep the line moving and get the next guy up. It was pretty crazy how quickly it changed and went from down 4-0 to winning 5-4. I've never seen anything like it."

Sophomore Max Amren got the rally started with a bloop triple down the right field line and scored on a single from Rylan Carty.

The Wildcats' hottest hitter came up next in Luke Schultz. The

Louisburg senior, who had been intentionally walked twice in the game, got a pitch to hit this time and cranked one over the fence for a 2-run home run.

More magic came the way of the Wildcats as Meade Rutherford reached on an error on a dropped pop-up at second base. That set up the dramatics for Bristol Barbour.



*Louisburg's Bristol Barbour stomps on home plate and his teammate are there to celebrate following his walk-off 2-run home run in the regional semis against Ottawa at Rock Creek High School.*

Barbour, who had doubled twice earlier, got a hold of a pitch and hit a 2-run walk-off home run to give the Wildcats a 5-4 win.

"They didn't pitch to Luke all day by intentionally walking him," Larson said. "He got an at-bat and did more than you could ask for with it. Bristol was crushing the ball all day. He really swung it well and that didn't change in his last at

bat. Off the bat I thought it had a chance and was pretty surreal to see it go out."

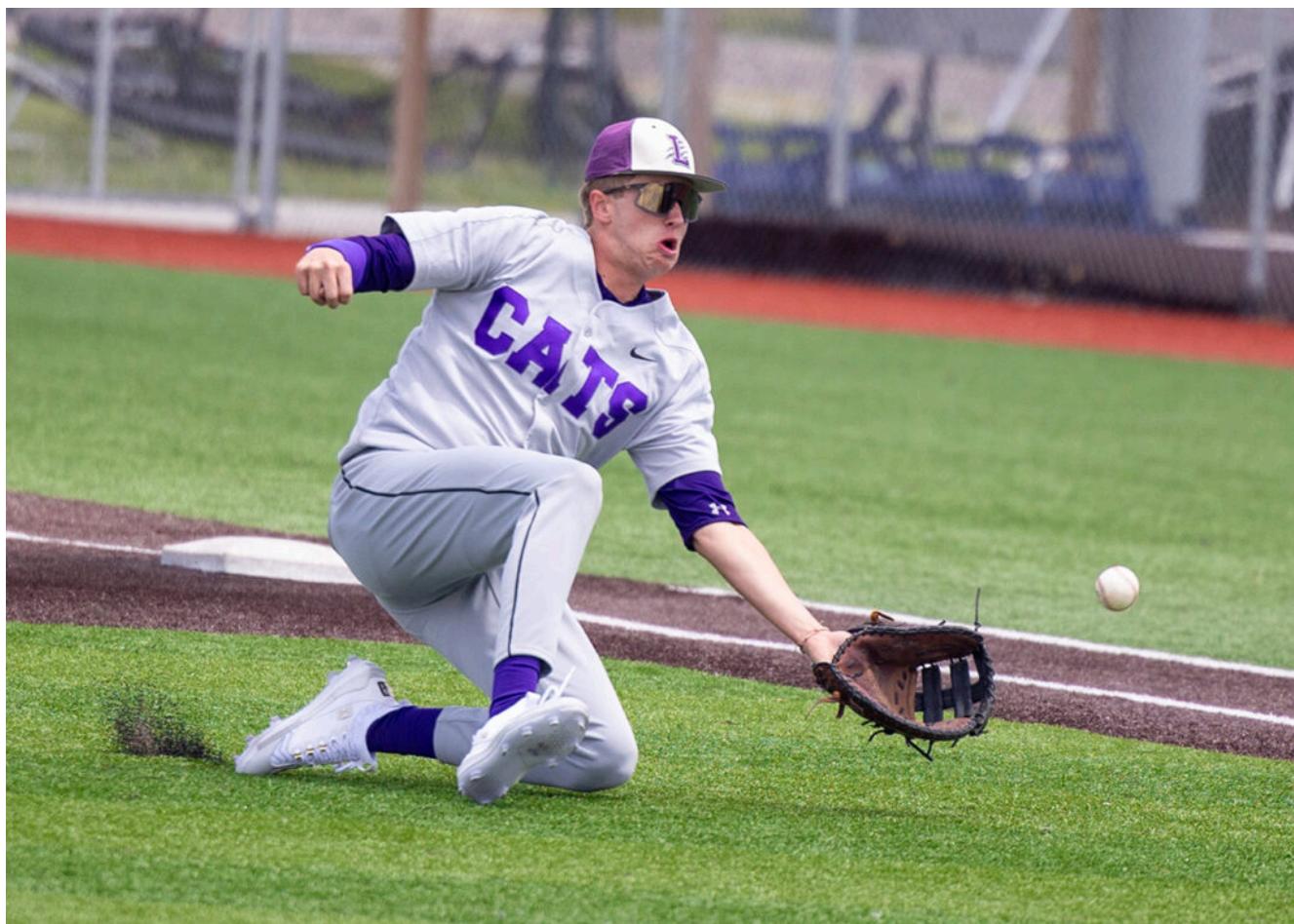
The Wildcats (18-7) also threw several arms at the Cyclones to keep the game close.

Rutherford started the game and gave up 2 earned runs in 2 2/3 innings and struck out three. Junior Christian Owens threw 3 1/3 and gave up two runs, both unearned, and also struck out three.

Senior Alex Saad pitched the final inning and gave up just one hit and a strikeout.

Saad went on to start the championship game against Rock Creek and held the Mustangs scoreless through three innings.

The Louisburg senior had to battle a tough strike zone in the top of the fourth and Rock Creek reached and scored a run on four straight walks.



*Louisburg first baseman Evan Moreland slides to make a running catch on a bunt on May 20 at Rock Creek.*

Owens came in for relief and was able to get out of the jam by allowing just one run. He pitched the final three innings and struck out six.

Rock Creek had just one hit the entire game, but were able to take advantage of free bases with two runs in the fourth and another in the fifth.

"I thought our pitchers battled all day," Larson said. "Meade gave us some good innings to begin the day. Saad did really well and bridged the gap and did well keeping us in the game. Christian really threw well in both games. He never gets rattled and threw his butt off in both games to keep it close to give our bats a chance."

The Wildcats had five hits on the contest, but couldn't get a runner across. Barbour had a double, his third of the day, and Amren had two hits to lead the Wildcat bats.

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## **Wildcats split with rival Paola on Senior Night**



***Louisburg senior Luke Schultz slides into home during the second game of a doubleheader with Paola on May 13 at Lewis-Young Park.***

Playoff seeding implications were at stake for Louisburg during its May 13 home doubleheader against Paola.

The Wildcats had a slim chance to host the Class 4A regional tournament with a sweep of their rival. Emotions were even higher as it was Senior Night for Louisburg as the Wildcats honored their six seniors and their families.

There was a lot to play for, and to make it more difficult, Paola was ranked No. 2 in 4A and ended the Wildcats' season at state a year ago.

All those emotions equaled out to a split between the two teams.

Paola struck first as it scored 11 runs in the first three innings and handed the Wildcats a 14-3 loss in the opener.

Louisburg was able to bounce back in the nightcap with a 9-4 victory after it jumped out to a big lead.

The Wildcats ended the regular season with a 17-6 record and earned the No. 5 seed in the regional tournament. Louisburg will travel to No. 4 Rock Creek on May 20 as the Wildcats try to get back to state.

"The guys did really well responding to a tough loss in game one," Louisburg coach Kade Larson said. "Being able to get the momentum early in the second game was big for us."

Louisburg jumped out to a 6-0 lead after two innings thanks to RBI singles from Jayce Toms and Carter Willey in the first. Max Amren and Carter Willey opened the second with a single and double, before Amren scored on a single from Luke Schultz.



*Louisburg seniors (from left) Rylan Carty, Meade Rutherford, Alex Saad, Luke Schultz, Jayce Toms and Carter Willey were*

***honored on May 13 with their parents during Senior Night.***

Paola committed two errors that led to two more Wildcat runs and they led 6-0. The Panthers answered with four in the top of the third, but the Wildcats added two more insurance runs in the fourth, and another in the fifth, to seal the win.

Wildcat junior Christian Owens came in for relief and struck out five over 4 1/3 innings of work to help preserve the victory. Senior Alex Saad started the game and picked up the win.

Carty led the Wildcat offense with three doubles in the contest, while Amren, Toms and Meade Rutherford each had two hits. Toms also had a team-high 3 RBIs.

“Rylan and Jayce swung it really well, which was nice to see, and Christian came in to really shut the door on the mound,” Larson said.

Prior to the contest, Rutherford, Willey, Saad, Rutherford, Schultz and Carty were all honored with their parents for Senior Night. It is a special group for Larson, one that helped the Wildcats to a state tournament a year ago.



***Louisburg junior Christian Owens pitched four scoreless innings of relief to help the Wildcats get the win against Paola.***

“These seniors have been great leaders for us,” Larson said. “They have done a great job of helping turn this program into contenders and laying the groundwork for those coming up after them.”

With the regular season behind them, the Wildcats will now focus on the postseason. Louisburg will square off with No. 12 Ottawa in the first round of regionals at 2 p.m. on May 20 at Rock Creek. If the Wildcats advance, they will play for the regional championship later that night against the winner of Rock Creek and No. 13 Eudora.

Rock Creek is the defending 4A state champion and Larson knows his team is going to have to play well to come out of a difficult regional.

“The guys are ready to go for regionals,” Larson said. “They

know we have a win or go home mentality and are excited to go compete for a regional championship. We're trying to take it one game at a time and find a way to win in order to get another game."

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## **Week 7 Athlete of the Week: Bristol Barbour**



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week seven of the spring sports season, sponsored by IronHorse Family and Cosmetic Dentistry.

### **BRISTOL BARBOUR, JUNIOR, BASEBALL**

Louisburg junior Bristol Barbour had a big week on the mound

and at the plate for the Wildcat baseball team. Barbour got the victory last Friday against KC-Washington and recorded six strikeouts in three innings. He also did damage with the bat as he tallied two doubles, a home run and had 6 RBIs. On the week, Barbour had five hits, three doubles and 8 RBIs.

It was the second straight week that Barbour homered and got the victory in the same game. On May 3 against Chanute, Barbour got the complete game victory with eight strikeouts. Then at the plate he tallied three hits, including a home run, and had 3 RBIs.

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

### **Previous winners**

Week 1: Luke Schultz

Week 2: Faith Sewell

Week 3: Meade Rutherford

Week 4: Brynley Bauer

Week 5: Rowan Yows

Week 6: Kendall Crossley



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# Wildcats roll KC-Washington in home victory



***Louisburg senior Luke Schultz gets a base hit during a game earlier this season. Schultz broke the school record for doubles in a season during the Wildcats' home game against KC-Washington on May 9 at Lewis-Young Park.***

It was just another day at the office for Louisburg junior Bristol Barbour as he made another big impact on the mound, and at the plate, for the Louisburg baseball team.

For the second time in less than a week, Barbour got the win on the mound and homered – this time it was against KC-Washington. The Wildcats scored early and often as they cruised to a 16-0 win.

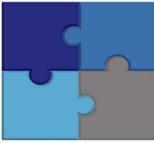
Barbour pitched the three innings and struck out six. However, he made a bigger impact at the plate as he hit a home run, doubled twice and had 6 RBIs.

Louisburg scored 11 runs in the first inning and never looked back in the 3-inning victory. It also improved the Wildcats' record to 16-5 on the season.

"The guys came out and did a great job jumping on them early," Louisburg coach Kade Larson said. "Bristol hit it well and pitched well. He has been seeing the ball well as of late and the team feeds off that energy."

Wildcats senior Rylan Carty also had a big day at the plate with two hits and 3 RBIs, while sophomore Max Amren also finished with two hits.

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“Luke is a great hitter,” Larson said. “It was awesome to see him break that record. I’ve told him, and others, I want to see them break every record we have, because that means we are probably doing pretty well as a team. Hopefully he continues extending the lead he now has throughout the rest of the season.”

The Wildcats will try and end their season strong as they host Paola on May 13 for a doubleheader. Every win counts for Louisburg as it tries to secure a top 4 seed to host the regional tournament.

It is also Senior Night for the Wildcats as they prepare to honor their six seniors. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.

## **Wildcats settle for split at Eudora**

Louisburg was hoping to leave Eudora with a pair of wins following their doubleheader on May 6.

It started out well as senior Meade Rutherford pitched a complete game shutout and led the Wildcats to a 9-0 victory over the Cardinals.

In the second game, despite getting off to a strong start, the Wildcats couldn’t hang on in a 5-4 loss.

“It wasn’t what we wanted leaving Eudora,” coach Larson said. “We had our chances for a sweep, but a couple mistakes cost us. We had a good first inning and then couldn’t find a rhythm at the plate to get much going.”

Rutherford shut down the Cardinals’ offense in the first game as he allowed just two hits over seven innings and struck out nine.

“Meade threw really well in game one,” Larson said. “He threw a lot of strikes and let his defense work behind him.”

Louisburg scored five runs in the third inning, which was more than enough for Rutherford. Senior Jayce Toms led the Wildcat offense with a double and a triple, while senior Rylan Carty and junior Bristol Barbour each had 2 RBIs.

In the nightcap, Louisburg jumped on Eudora for four runs in the first innings and took a 4-2 lead into the bottom of the fifth, where Eudora scored three runs.

Wildcat senior Alex Saad had another strong start for Louisburg as he allowed just one earned run in 4 2/3 innings and struck out nine. Christian Owens came in for relief and struck out three of the four batters he faced.

"Saad and Owens both pitched really well, too," Larson said. "Saad has really done a great job pitching to contact this year and then knowing when to mix it up to get strikeouts, too."

Junior Evan Moreland had 2 RBIs to lead Louisburg, while Rutherford and Toms each had a run batted in.

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## **Barbour shines in Louisburg victory over Chanute**



***Louisburg junior Bristol Barbour earned the win on May 3 over Chanute with eight strikeouts. He also homered in the 11-3 victory.***

Bristol Barbour did a little bit of everything for the Louisburg baseball team during the Wildcats' home contest on May 3 against Chanute.

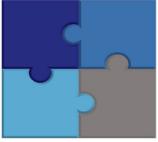
Barbour not only earned the win with an 8-strikeout performance on the mound, he also collected three hits – including a home run – to guide the Wildcats to an 11-3 victory over the Blue Comets at Lewis-Young Park.

The Louisburg junior put together five innings on the mound and allowed just two earned runs on five hits to go along with the eight strikeouts.

At the plate, Barbour recorded a 3-hit performance, which not only included a home run, but a bunt single as well. He also drove home three runs.

"Bristol did really well all around," Louisburg coach Kade Larson said. "He threw a ton of strikes and created a ton of weak contact. He also got it done at the plate. Being able to bunt for a hit, and then hit a home run the next at bat, is pretty difficult and he made it look easy."

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Chanute scored two runs in the top of the first to take an early lead, but the Wildcats answered right back with three in the bottom of the inning. The Blue Comets added a run in the third to tie it, but the Wildcats scored eight unanswered runs the rest of the way to seal the win.

"It was good to get out there on Saturday and fix some issues we had from the Thursday game," Larson said. "The guys responded well and found a way to get the job done."



***Louisburg senior Carter Willey makes contact for a base hit against Chanute on May 3.***

Louisburg pounded out 14 hits on the day and worked around three errors to get the win.

Wildcat senior Luke Schultz also had a big day with two doubles and an RBI. Meade Rutherford and Carter Willey also had two hits.

Jayce Toms and Evan Moreland each had an RBI double in the victory.

Junior Christian Owens pitched the final two innings of relief for the Wildcats and shut down the Blue Comets with just one hit allowed and had five strikeouts.

Louisburg will try and continue its winning ways on May 6 when the Wildcats travel to Eudora for a doubleheader.

# Wildcats lose home contest to Anderson County

In what was originally supposed to be a doubleheader, Louisburg's contest with Anderson County on May 1 turned into a single game due to scheduling conflicts.

Unfortunately for the Wildcats, they didn't get a chance to make up for what was a tough first game. Louisburg committed five errors, which led to a 5-4 loss to the Bulldogs.

Anderson County scored the winning run in the top of the sixth inning to pull ahead for good. Louisburg had the bases loaded with no outs in the bottom of the seventh, but the Wildcats struck out twice and grounded out to end the threat.

"We have some mistakes we have to clean up," Larson said. "We didn't play a clean game and allowed them to hang around. We kept battling and gave ourselves a chance at the end but just couldn't get the job done."

Seniors Meade Rutherford and Alex Saad split time on the mound and allowed just one earned run between the two of them to go along with nine strikeouts.

Rutherford also had a big night at the plate with two hits, including a 2-run home run in the third to give the Wildcats an early 2-1 lead.

Luke Schultz and Jayce Toms also had two hits a piece for the Wildcats and both had a double.