

Big innings hurt Wildcat baseball against Eudora



Louisburg pitcher Grant Harding fields a ground ball and prepares to make a throw to first base while teammate Ben LaJoie backs up the play Tuesday at Lewis-Young Park.

The Louisburg High School baseball team had its best offensive performance of the season in its doubleheader Tuesday at Lewis-Young Park.

Unfortunately for the Wildcats, Eudora had an even better one.

Eudora scored 12 runs in each game and pulled away for a 12-9 and 12-6 win to sweep the Wildcats. Louisburg gave up one big inning in each contest, which proved to be the difference.

“We struggled to get outs in several innings and it cost us big,” Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. “We lost focus on the little things and those little mistakes added up. Like a snowball rolling down the mountain, we’ve been riding the momentum when we are up, and been knocked down when things are going against us.”

In the opener, the Wildcats had to play from behind early on as Eudora scored three in the first inning off pitcher Dalton Stone to take the lead. Louisburg rallied to score two in the third inning and had five-run fourth inning to grab an 8-3 lead.

Garrett Caldwell opened the inning with a single and Stone followed it up with a double. After a Sam Guetterman walk, Korbin Hankinson and Blake Ruder singled to keep the inning going.

Louisburg also took advantage of five Eudora errors to jump in front and it seemed to have everything going its way – until the next inning, anyway.

Eudora exploded for nine runs in the top of the fifth inning on eight hits and two walks as the Wildcats (1-5) quickly saw their lead disappear.

Hankinson led the Louisburg bats with a three-hit game, including a double and an RBI. Grant Harding and Caldwell also had a pair of hits for the Wildcats, while Ruder finished with a team-high 2 RBIs.

“Offensively, we had our best performance of the season,” McGhee said. “We got runners on, moved them around the bases, and plated runs. We are developing a better approach at the plate, but still have a few kinks to workout. We had multiple guys come up with key hits that kept innings going. As a team, we thrive on the energy that we get from those innings, but we’ve got to find a way to sustain it.”

The Wildcats pounded out 12 hits in the second game, but trailed 7-1 in the sixth. Louisburg got back into the game in the bottom of the inning as it scored five runs.

Harding opened the inning on a single and scored on a double by Nate Swenson. After a Mitchell Drew single, both runners scored on a Ben LaJoie single to cut the Eudora lead to 7-4.

Eudora issued back to back walks to Beckett Rasmussen and Stone to load the bases, Hankinson singled home a pair of runs to make it 7-6.

After cutting the Cardinal lead to one, Louisburg committed

back-to-back errors to start the seventh, which led to five Eudora runs and put the game out of reach.

Five Wildcats had a multi-hit game and Swenson led the Louisburg bats with three hits and 2 RBIs. Hankinson and LaJoie each had two hits and 2 RBIs, while Drew and Harding also finished with a pair of hits.

Louisburg returns to action today when it hosts Wellsville for a doubleheader. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m. at Lewis-Young Park.

Wildcats rally for split against Prairie View



Louisburg shortstop Nate Swenson tries to turn a double play during Friday's home opener against Prairie View at Lewis-Young Park. The Wildcats lost the first game 5-2, but came back to take the nightcap, 8-5.

It was already on the wrong end of one game and was well on its way to chalking up another in the loss column.

After falling 5-2 to Prairie View in the first game of a doubleheader Friday, the Louisburg High School baseball team

was staring another loss in the face. The Wildcats were down five runs and their bats had gone silent.

That was until the third inning when the Wildcats answered with three runs, then added two more in the fifth and three more in the sixth to rally for an 8-5 victory in the nightcap of their home opener at Lewis-Young Park.

“We showed great resilience,” Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. “We had some key hits that kept things going and made some solid defensive plays to get momentum on our side. Once things started rolling, we fed off of the energy.”

Louisburg (1-3) was able to string several hits together to get the rally going in the third inning as junior Christian Tosterud came through with a 2-run single and later scored on a double from freshman Madden Rutherford.

Down a pair of runs two innings later, the Wildcat bats struck again. Junior Nate Swenson came through with an RBI single and came around to score himself when Rutherford reached on a Prairie View error and tied the game at 5-all.

The Wildcats broke the game open in the sixth as senior Korbin Hankinson doubled home a run and fellow senior Blake Ruder drove home Sam Guetterman to cut the lead to one. Hankinson later came around to score on a ground ball from Grant Harding.

Hankinson, Ruder, Swenson, Tosterud and Dalton Stone all had two hit games for Louisburg, while Tosterud and Rutherford each led the way with 2 RBIs.

“The hits gave us the confidence that we needed offensively,” McGhee said. “We are capable of doing some good things and I think we needed to prove it to ourselves. Once runners are on base, we have potential to do some good things, we just have to give ourselves the opportunity by starting with a solid approach at the plate.”



Junior Mitchell Drew tracks down a ball in left field Friday against Prairie View.

Harding, a senior, picked up the win in relief as he pitched the final four innings to give Louisburg a chance. He gave up just two hits and struck out four during that span.

“Grant came in and had a solid performance,” McGhee said. “He attacked the zone, worked hitters and executed several plays

that led to key outs. His performance helped us build the momentum we needed. He cut Prairie View's offense down, making quick work of the batters that he faced."

Louisburg got off to a good start in the opener as it struck first for two runs in the bottom of the first. Hankinson led off with a single, stole second and third and later scored on a Harding ground out.

Swenson followed with a double and then junior Mitchell Drew scored Swenson with a double of his own to give Louisburg a 2-0 lead.

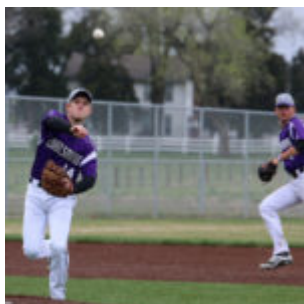
Prairie View took advantage of a Wildcat miscue to start the third inning and led to a five-run frame. After the error, five of the next six Buffalo hitters reached on a hit to account for the five runs.

Stone started for the Wildcats, pitched five innings and held Prairie View scoreless in four of those frames. He gave up the four earned runs, but also had six strikeouts on the day. Guetterman came in for the final two innings and didn't allow a run.

"The mistakes we made in the third inning hurt us, but that was not our only struggle," McGhee said. "Stone was throwing good stuff and then the mood changed once we made the errors. We also struggled to make solid contact and had some very quick at-bats which hurt us offensively."

Louisburg will try for another win today when it hosts Eudora for a 4:30 p.m. first pitch at Lewis-Young Park. The Wildcats will also host Wellsville on Thursday.

Paola takes two from Louisburg in opener



Louisburg third baseman Ben Lajoie makes a throw to first during the Wildcats' season opener last Thursday in Paola. The Wildcats fell to the Panthers 10-0 and 7-4.

PAOLA – As cold and windy as it was for Louisburg's season opener against Paola, it made it all the more difficult to get its bats heated up.

The Wildcats managed just three hits in the doubleheader last Thursday in Paola as they fell 10-0 and 7-4. Paola's pitching also had a little something to do with it.

The Panther hurlers struck out 19 Louisburg batters over the two games and had a hard time putting many scoring opportunities together.

"The first game was rough," Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. "We struggled at the plate, had a hard time hitting spots with our pitches, and were noticeably rusty. The second game was a big improvement from the first. Defensive efforts were better, our approach at the plate improved, and our focus improved."

Louisburg (0-2) had a tough time against Paola's Blaine Hanf in the opener. Hanf pitched a six-inning no hitter and struck out 12 Wildcats.

"Hanf is a very solid pitcher and he kept most of our guys

guessing throughout their at-bats,” McGhee said. “He was hitting his spots and he threw quality pitches. He had quality off-speed pitches to go with his fastball.”

Louisburg senior Dalton Stone started the opener for the Wildcats, and despite allowing three runs in the first inning, settled down to pitch two scoreless innings and struck out four batters. Kylan Harper and Joe Allen came in for relief.

The Wildcats were a little more patient at the plate in the nightcap as they drew eight walks and converted those into four runs. Louisburg took a one-run lead in the first inning after senior Blake Ruder reached on an error and later scored on a sacrifice fly by Nate Swenson.



Louisburg second baseman Sam Guetterman makes a throw to first for an out last Thursday in Paola.

Paola answered back with two runs in the bottom of the second,

but the Wildcats took the lead back with two in the third. Stone walked with the bases loaded and scored Grant Harding and then Christian Tosterud scored on a Madden Rutherford ground out.

The Panthers jumped in front again in the bottom of the third to take a one-run lead, but the Wildcats tied it an inning later when Korbin Hankinson scored on a fielder's choice. In the bottom of the fourth inning, Paola took the lead for good with three runs.

Harding started the second game for the Wildcats and went three innings and gave up three earned runs to go along with two strikeouts. Sam Guetterman come on in relief and helped the Wildcats get out of a jam as he pitched 2 2/3 innings and gave up just one hit and struck out two.

"As a pitching staff we struggled to hit locations," McGhee said. "We gave up a lot of free bases, which hurt us, as Paola got some timely hits to follow them up. We threw quality pitches, but struggled with hitting spots. Stone, took a little bit of time to get going, but once he was on he threw quality stuff.

"Harding came out and was very efficient with his pitches. He made quick work through several innings. Guetterman also did a great job hitting locations and pitching efficiently. He came in a tough spot and got us out of a jam. Then finished the second game with some great stuff. It is nice having him back this season. We lost him last year to injury and it is great to see that he has made a recovery and is bringing great stuff."

The Wildcats will try for their first win of the season Thursday when it hosts Prairie View for a doubleheader at Lewis-Young Park. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.

Frontier League shakeup could happen soon



In a few months – or even weeks – the Frontier League as it currently stands could have a different look.

Since March, meetings have gone on within member schools of the Frontier League and Kaw Valley League to discuss possible realignment of both leagues.

The Frontier League currently has seven members – Louisburg, Paola, Spring Hill, De Soto, Ottawa, Baldwin and Eudora – and a meeting between the schools took place on March 28 to discuss where each school stood as far as their happiness in the league.

Brian Biermann, superintendent of USD 416, and Louisburg High School athletic director Darin Gagnebin attended the meeting on Louisburg's behalf and both relayed the fact that every school stated they were happy with the way the league is currently set up, but a couple schools came to the realization the Frontier League might not be able to offer what they are looking for.

De Soto and Spring Hill currently have growing enrollment numbers are interested in playing Class 5A competition. De Soto moved up to 5A this school year and Spring Hill will look to make the jump in the coming years with its larger

enrollment. The rest of the schools all compete in Class 4A.

Both schools stated they would like more competition at the sub-varsity level that schools like Louisburg, Baldwin and Eudora cannot provide. Competing in a mainly 5A league would relieve some of those problems.

“De Soto said they will probably open next year with 950 kids and they would grow by 100 the year after that,” Biermann said. “They are happy in the Frontier, but they feel like they need 5A competition and they feel like it could hurt them in football with seedings and tie-breakers. They could potentially get penalized by competing in a mainly 4A league.

“Spring Hill wants to be proactive. Their growth is coming. Their classes in the middle school are pretty good size. They won’t grow a lot next year, but they will in the next few years.”

What started the meetings is due to the fact that the Kaw Valley League is looking to rework their situation or create a brand new look altogether. The Kaw Valley currently has seven schools in Lansing, Turner, Bonner Springs, Tonganoxie, Piper, Bishop Ward and Basehor-Linwood, but one member – Bishop Ward – is leaving for a new league beginning next school year.

According to report in March from the *Tonganoxie Mirror*, Lansing wants to create a larger league that would contain all or some combinations of Lansing, Blue Valley Southwest, De Soto, Leavenworth, Bonner Springs, Basehor-Linwood, Tonganoxie, Ottawa, Piper, Spring Hill, Turner and Topeka schools Seaman, Shawnee Heights and Topeka West.

Many of those schools are either in Class 5A already or are close based on enrollment numbers. The idea of competing against bigger competition is intriguing to De Soto, Spring Hill – and possibly Ottawa – the three largest schools in the Frontier League.

An idea was thrown around of creating a league of two divisions between the Kaw Valley and Frontier. One division would be 5A schools and the other would be 4A.

“We visited with our board of education and we are not in favor of a mega-league,” Biermann said. “That has been talked about – having a league of 5A and 4A schools. We don’t want to invite new 5A schools. We are ok with Spring Hill and De Soto staying in the league, even though they are growing, but we don’t want to invite other 5A schools or have a mega league so they can have better competition.

“Our stance is if De Soto and Spring Hill feel like they need 5A competition and leave, then they can work towards that and we can work on filling those spots with 4A schools.”

Both Biermann and Gagnebin feel like the Frontier League needs to be proactive as changes could be made sooner rather than later.

“We aren’t panicking as a league as much as the Kaw Valley schools are because they know they are headed for a break up,” Gagnebin said. “We could easily stay with the seven schools we have. Pretty soon, De Soto will have close to 1,000 kids. It is more on them if they want to be in our league, and if they are happy, by all means stay. We are not saying they have to leave, but they have to do best what is for their school, and if this league isn’t the best option for you, then you have to look elsewhere.”

Due to the fact De Soto and Spring Hill could be moving on, the Frontier is being proactive and inviting some members of the Kaw Valley League to come make presentations at a meeting Wednesday to see if they would be a fit in the Frontier.

According to Biermann, Tonganoxie, Piper, Bonner Springs and Basehor-Linwood High Schools will all make presentations at the meeting and then schools from both the Kaw Valley and the Frontier will meet to discuss options at a later date.

"I led the (March 28) meeting and I wanted to make sure everyone was as honest and open as possible," Biermann said. "There were no hurt feelings. Collectively we don't want a mega-league, no additional 5A schools and that is firm from us, Paola, Baldwin and Eudora. Spring Hill and De Soto left the meeting, I think, that they need to start looking for potential 5A competition.

"The easy fix would be for De Soto and Spring Hill to join the bigger league and we take someone like Tonganoxie and Piper to replace them. Every school said they loved the Frontier League and competition, but it is time there has to be some conversations. The biggest thing is we don't have three baseball, softball or soccer teams to schedule, but De Soto and Spring Hill want that. We can't field C teams in some cases."

The leagues are on a sort of a time crunch. With football reclassifications and scheduling beginning this October for the next two years, it would be the best case scenario to get the reshuffling done before then so they can schedule for the 2018-19 season and beyond according to Gagnebin.

The Louisburg activities director also believes keeping the right number of teams is also imperative for a healthy league.

"We want to maintain the integrity of our league, whether that is with seven or even eight schools," Gagnebin said. "We want to maintain that number. Nine is a scheduling nightmare, and if you only have six teams, you are opening up a can of worms where if you leave an open spot, then the state could come in and assign certain schools to us that aren't a good fit.

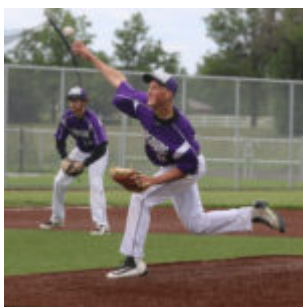
"I don't necessarily want them to leave the league, but we need to be told if they are. I am more afraid of them leaving our league than them staying in our league. I am not afraid of the competition we face with them. We can compete with them in all the sports, but I am more afraid of us dropping from a

seven to a five-team league.”

However, one hiccup remains. The Frontier League bylaws state that a member school must give two years notice before leaving the league.

“If the dominoes start falling fast, the league could pass a bylaw amendment to allow for movement for De Soto or whoever, which is something I think they will have to do,” Gagnebin said. “Not much is happening now, but when it does it is going to happen quick. You better be ready to move with it and have a plan in place or you could be stuck on the outside.”

Wildcat baseball ready to improve on 8-win season



Louisburg senior Dalton Stone will be one of the Wildcats' starting pitchers this season along with fellow senior Grant Harding. Seven seniors return to lead Louisburg after an 8-12 season a year ago.

The Louisburg baseball team saw its season come to an end in dramatic fashion as it fell in the final inning to rival Paola in the regional playoffs.

If the loss wasn't tough enough, the Wildcats had to say goodbye to six seniors in the process.

Those things sometimes mean a team will be in rebuilding mode the next year, but not the Wildcats. Louisburg returns a seven-member senior class to help lead the Wildcats to what they hope is a farther run in the postseason.

"We have big expectations," Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. "We are looking to improve on our record from last year, and have a group of seniors that have been very competitive in each sport they have played this year. They have the desire to work toward winning our regional and moving forward into the state tournament."

The Wildcats will try and better their 8-12 record a season ago and it starts on the mound. Seniors Grant Harding and Dalton Stone will serve as the team's starting pitchers, while Kylan Harper, Sam Guetterman, Nate Swenson, Joe Allen, Noah Larson, Jakob Krause and Madden Rutherford will all see plenty of work, as well, in starting or relief roles.

"We have quality arms with significant experience returning this year," McGhee said. "Dalton and Grant have put in quality innings throughout their careers. Kylan came up with a solid win against Spring Hill at the end of last season, and we are looking for solid work from the recent Avila signee."

"All of those guys, and others, could see time as starters or relievers based upon our need and limitations from pitch restrictions."

A big reason for the larger pitching staff is the new pitch count rule that is in effect for the upcoming season. A pitcher will have to sit a number of days based on the amount of pitches thrown with a maximum of 105 pitches.

If a pitcher throws 76-105 pitches, they are required to sit four calendar days. They will have sit three days if 61-75 are

thrown, two days for 46-60 and one day for 31-45 pitches.

Here are some guidelines on the rule from the Kansas State High School Activities Association:

- Required rest means calendar days. Throwing 105 pitches on Monday means the required rest period will be Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The first available day to return to competitive pitching is Saturday.
- All pitch count guidelines apply to an individual pitcher on a daily basis. For example, a pitcher could pitch in both games of a double header, not to exceed 105 pitches. The total number of pitches the pitcher throws that day will determine the pitcher's days of rest that must follow the double header.
- A player's pitch count and required days of rest apply to games at any and all levels of play. Example: Player A throws 62 pitches in a junior varsity game. Player A must rest three days before pitching in a JV, varsity or other sublevel game.
- Number of pitches are competitive pitches only. Warmup or bullpen pitches do not count.
- A pitcher will be allowed to finish a batter if they reach the max of 105 in the middle of the at bat.
- If the pitcher is ambidextrous, the pitch count guidelines apply to the individual pitcher, not to the individual arm.

If a pitcher exceeds the 105 pitch limit, the player and coach will become ineligible until reinstated by the Kansas State High School Activities Association.

"It plays a role in both offensive and defensive strategies," McGhee said of the new rule. "The challenge comes in managing pitchers on weeks when we play two double headers, one Tuesday and the next on Thursday. To make sure that we have enough arms available we will be floating a few pitchers between

junior varsity and varsity. It will be an adjustment that both athletes and coaches will have to adjust to. Pitchers may enter a game with a quota of pitches.

“Pitching efficiently, getting batters to hit ground balls and fly balls and increasing strike to ball ratios, becomes more valuable than being a guy that can strike everyone out. Throwing efficiently allows pitchers to throw more frequently and allows the line-up to stay more consistent from game to game.”

Along with being on the mound, Harding will also see plenty of time as the team’s starting first baseman. Harding earned second team all-Frontier League honors last season in the outfield and is one of two returning all-league players. Fellow senior Korbin Hankinson will start in centerfield after being named to the honorable mention team last season.

Harding also had a big season offensively as he had a team-best .453 average in 58 plate appearances and had 24 hits. He ended up with four doubles, three triples, nine RBIs and had a .642 slugging percentage.

He also started four games on the mound and had a 2-0 record with 19 strikeouts, 16 walks and a 3.91 earned run average. In the outfield, Harding had just one error and added three assists.

Hankinson had a .333 average in 53 plate appearances with 14 hits and four RBIs. He also didn’t have an error in his spot in the outfield and had two assists.

Senior Blake Ruder and junior Mitchell Drew will join Hankinson as the team’s regular outfielders. Senior Ben Lajoie will see time at third base, while Swenson, a junior, is the team’s starting shortstop. Guetterman will play at second while sophomore Beckett Rasmussen and junior Garrett Caldwell will share time as the team’s catcher.

Harper, a senior, and Rutherford, a freshman, will also see time in the infield. Junior Christian Tosterud will also play in the outfield.

“Practice has been going well,” McGhee said. “We have been able to get in a lot of good swings and been able to get quality time outside. During this time of year, it is always a guessing game as to how much time you will get outside and this year we have been able to get outdoors quite a bit. Having had good weather has allowed us to get in a lot of quality reps defensively.

“We all are definitely ready to get the season rolling. A month’s worth of practice has everyone ready to see some competition. Scrimmages amongst each other are very beneficial, but they just aren’t quite the same as testing your mettle against a rival.”

Louisburg will host Prairie View on Thursday for a doubleheader in its home opener. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m. at Lewis-Young Park.

Harper to play baseball at Avila



Louisburg High School senior Kylan Harper signed his letter of intent on March 10 to play baseball at Avila University next

season. Sitting next to Kylan are his parents Larry and Stephanie Harper. Standing is Louisburg baseball coaches Robert Ebenstein, Joel McGhee and Zach Livingston.

Kylan Harper has been patiently waiting for the day for his dream to become a reality.

Harper, who has played baseball since he was 3-years-old, has always wanted a chance to play on the collegiate level. That day finally came earlier this month.

On March 10, the Louisburg High School senior signed his letter of intent to play baseball at Avila University in front of family and friends. Harper hopes to take full advantage of this opportunity.

“I have been dreaming of playing college baseball for a long time now,” Harper said. “It is really exciting to go somewhere even though a lot of people doubted me along the way. I am definitely excited to play at Avila next year.”

Harper got noticed by Avila thanks to his summer coach, Rod Myers. Harper plays for Myers on his KC Elite team and got Harper a tryout with the Eagles.

The tryout couldn't have gone better as Avila offered him a spot on the Eagles' roster. Avila, who is coached by Daryl Cronk, has reached the NAIA National Tournament three times in his six years and Harper is excited to be a part of the good tradition.



“I really like (Avila’s) coach and Rod said some really good things about them and their program,” Harper said. “It think this opportunity can really help me out and get better.”

Pitching has been in Harper’s blood for a long time and he has worked for several years to try and get better. Harper, who throws a fastball, curve, changeup – and sometimes a knuckleball – hopes to make an impact with the Avila program, whether as a starter or as a reliever.

"I am not sure on where I will fit in yet, I just want to go down there and do my best," he said.

Harper, who started on the junior varsity level last season with the Wildcats, eventually cracked the varsity roster late in the year and picked up his first win against Spring Hill.

He hopes to make a big impact for Louisburg this season as he is one of seven seniors that will lead the Wildcats into the 2017 campaign.

"I think if we all play to our ability, I really think we have a chance to go pretty far," he said.

Along with baseball, Harper is ready to pursue his college degree as he plans to major in criminal justice.

Wildcat baseball earns five all-league selections



Louisburg's Matt Risenhoover was one of five Wildcats recently selected to the all-Frontier League baseball team. Risenhoover was named as a second team infielder and was one of the Wildcats' top offensive players.

The Louisburg High School baseball team found itself in a lot

of close games in one of the tougher leagues in Class 4A.

The Frontier League put two teams in the Class 4A, Division I state tournament and the Wildcats faced difficult competition every week, which led to eight wins on the season.

Although Louisburg didn't have a .500 record, the league coaches still rewarded the Wildcats with several spots on the all-league team. The Wildcats put five players on the squad, including a pair of second team nominations.

Senior Matt Risenhoover (infield) and junior Grant Harding (outfield) were named to the all-Frontier League second team to lead Louisburg. Senior Alex Dunn (catcher), senior Austin Henderson (infield) and junior Korbin Hankinson (utility) also earned honorable mention.



Grant Harding, second team, outfield

Risenhoover had a strong season offensively as he led Louisburg with 25 hits in 66 plate appearances. He also added a team-high seven doubles and 17 RBIs.

In the field, he finished with a .915 fielding percentage and had just five errors at the shortstop position.

Harding also a big season offensively as he had a team-best .453 average in 58 plate appearances and had 24 hits. He ended

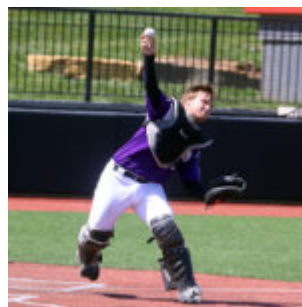
up with four doubles, three triples, nine RBIs and had a .642 slugging percentage.

He also started four games on the mound and had a 2-0 record with 19 strikeouts, 16 walks and a 3.91 earned run average. In the outfield, Harding had just one error and added three assists.

Henderson had a strong final season for Louisburg and provided a lot of power in the middle of the lineup for the Wildcats. He finished the season with a .348 average and had 24 hits in 77 plate appearances. Henderson added six doubles and three home runs on the season to go along with 16 RBIs.



Austin Henderson,
honorable
mention, infield



Alex Dunn,
honorable
mention, catcher



Korbin Hankinson,
honorable
mention, utility

As for Dunn, he was also a fixture in the middle of the Wildcat lineup and hit .317 on the season with 20 hits, three doubles, a triple and seven RBIs. He also had a team-high 12 walks.

Defensively, Dunn caught every game for the Wildcats and committed just three errors in 20 games.

Hankinson had a .333 average in 53 plate appearances with 14 hits and four RBIs. He also didn't have an error in his spot in the outfield and had two assists.

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE BASEBALL

First Team

Catcher: Jared Fry, Eudora, senior

Infield: Donovan Sutti, Paola, junior; Andrew White, De Soto, senior; Kaleb Shaffer, sophomore; Cody Lucas, Spring Hill, sophomore

Outfield: Blaine Ray, Ottawa, junior; Blain Ohlmeier, Paola, senior; Ben Van Diest, Eudora, senior

Pitcher: Zach Courbat, Eudora, senior; Blaine Hanf, Paola, junior

Utility: Mason McDow, Paola, senior

Second Team

Catcher: Anthony Slaughter, De Soto, sophomore

Infield: Aaron Foster, Eudora, senior; **Matt Risenhoover, Louisburg, senior**; Keegan Finch, Ottawa, junior; Jakob Shields, De Soto, senior

Outfield: Cooper Lee, De Soto, senior; **Grant Harding, Louisburg, junior**; Ivan Hughes, Spring Hill, senior

Pitcher: Zach Bilek, De Soto, senior; Zach Curry, Ottawa, junior

Utility: Adam Carlson, Baldwin, junior

Honorable mention

Catcher: **Alex Dunn, Louisburg, senior**

Infield: Jake Schrock, Baldwin, sophomore; **Austin Henderson, Louisburg, senior**; Drew Burger, Spring Hill, junior

Outfield: Nathan Staats, Paola, senior; Ben Morgenstern, Baldwin, senior

Pitcher: Aaron Foster, senior, honorable mention

Utility: **Korbin Hankinson, Louisburg, junior**; Chris Misner-Iles, Eudora, senior

Henderson signs with Pittsburg State baseball



Louisburg High School first baseman Austin Henderson is getting a chance to achieve his dream when he found out last week that he earned a spot on the Pittsburg State baseball team.

Baseball is in Austin Henderson's blood.

Like many young athletes across the country, Henderson has played the game he loves since he was small and always had aspirations of playing college baseball one day. Once the high school baseball season was over in May, he has been looking for that right fit.

He found that perfect place last week.

Henderson earned a spot with the Pittsburg State baseball team and the recent Louisburg High School graduate is looking forward to hitting the field with the NCAA Division II program.

“Since I was little I knew I wanted to play baseball at the college level so when the coach offered me a spot it was crazy because a dream became a reality,” Henderson said.

That coach is Tom Myers, who was hired to take over the Gorillas program last month. The Gorillas finished 15-33 last season, but Henderson is excited to learn under Myers, who led Central Missouri State to the NCAA Tournament six times.

After speaking with Myers during his college visit, the choice was an easy one for Henderson.

“Pitt State is an awesome school and when I took my visit it felt just like home,” Henderson said. “Coach Myers is an awesome guy and he is a winner. I can’t wait to play under him.”

Henderson also had some guidance from former Louisburg baseball coach Jeff Lohse, who played for the Gorilla baseball team himself. Lohse coached Henderson his first three years in high school.

“I really want to thank coach Lohse for all his help,” Henderson said. “He was a huge part in all this and he really helped me out a lot with the recruiting process.”

Henderson had a strong final season for Louisburg as he earned honorable mention all-Frontier League honors at first base. He also provided a lot of power in the middle of the lineup for the Wildcats.

He finished the season with a .348 average and had 24 hits in 77 plate appearances. Henderson added six doubles and three home runs on the season to go along with 16 RBIs. He also

walked eight and struck out just nine times.

Although Henderson played a lot of first base for the Wildcats, that won't necessarily be his position at Pittsburg State. The Gorillas coaches want to try him in a couple different spots and Henderson is happy to give it a try.

"After speaking with coach Myers, he wants to see me play more around the field and try third base and the outfield," Henderson said. "As for playing time, it isn't guaranteed and he said the best player plays and if I work hard then it will be a possibility for me to play right away. He doesn't want to make the decision to redshirt me or not until the end of winter when he can gauge where I am at."

All-Frontier League Baseball Team

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE BASEBALL

First Team

Catcher: Jared Fry, Eudora, senior

Infield: Donovan Sutti, Paola, junior; Andrew White, De Soto, senior; Kaleb Shaffer, sophomore; Cody Lucas, Spring Hill, sophomore

Outfield: Blaine Ray, Ottawa, junior; Blain Ohlmeier, Paola, senior; Ben Van Diest, Eudora, senior

Pitcher: Zach Courbat, Eudora, senior; Blaine Hanf, Paola, junior

Utility: Mason McDow, Paola, senior

Second Team

Catcher: Anthony Slaughter, De Soto, sophomore

Infield: Aaron Foster, Eudora, senior; **Matt Risenhoover, Louisburg, senior**; Keegan Finch, Ottawa, junior; Jakob Shields, De Soto, senior

Outfield: Cooper Lee, De Soto, senior; **Grant Harding, Louisburg, junior**; Ivan Hughes, Spring Hill, senior

Pitcher: Zach Bilek, De Soto, senior; Zach Curry, Ottawa, junior

Utility: Adam Carlson, Baldwin, junior

Honorable mention

Catcher: **Alex Dunn, Louisburg, senior**

Infield: Jake Schrock, Baldwin, sophomore; **Austin Henderson, Louisburg, senior**; Drew Burger, Spring Hill, junior

Outfield: Nathan Staats, Paola, senior; Ben Morgenstern, Baldwin, senior

Pitcher: Aaron Foster, senior, honorable mention

Utility: **Korbin Hankinson, Louisburg, junior**; Chris Misner-Iles, Eudora, senior

Wildcats fall in dramatic fashion to end season



Louisburg catcher Alex Dunn tags out a Paola runner at the plate during the Wildcats' first round regional tournament game in Paola. The Wildcats took a lead into the final inning, but fell to the Panthers 4-3.

PAOLA – The Louisburg baseball team was just three outs away from creating some major reverberations at the Class 4A regional tournament in Paola.

Three outs and the Wildcats would knock off No. 1 seed Paola and they would find themselves in the regional championship game for the right to go to state. As it turned out, getting those outs was easier said than done.

After Louisburg took the lead with a run in the seventh inning, Paola answered with a pair of runs in bottom of the inning to win in walk-off fashion, 4-3, on May 17. The loss ended the Wildcats' season and they finished with an 8-12 record.

“It was a tough loss,” Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. “Many of the guys were hoping to move deeper into the playoffs this year and to have the opportunity slip away hits hard. We played some of the best baseball we had all year and made some great plays to get out of a couple of jams. We hit well and did a good job moving on the base paths. We had key hits when

we needed them, but still left a number of runners on base.”

The game was tied at 3-all going into seventh inning thanks to the Louisburg defense the inning before. Paola appeared it was going to break the game open as it loaded the bases with no outs.

Louisburg got some help when Paola bunted foul for a third strike to get the first out. The Panthers then hit a sharp groundball, but Wildcat first baseman Austin Henderson made a diving stop and threw home to get the force.

Pitcher Colton Smith then coaxed a groundball his way for an easy third out and gave Louisburg some momentum.



Senior Cale Schneider connects on an RBI single during the Wildcats' regional tournament game on May 17 in Paola.

The Wildcats had one last rally in them as they were able to scratch out a run to take the lead a back.

Senior Cale Schneider reached on an error to lead off the inning, and with two outs, Paola intentionally walked

Henderson. Senior Alex Dunn made the Panthers pay as he singled to score Schneider and broke the tie.

Smith then singled to load the bases, but the Wildcats weren't able to get that extra run.

"The guys did a great job with two outs," McGhee said. "Dunn's at-bat after the initial walk to Henderson was huge. He kept us moving forward and elevated everyone's energy, we were able to load the bases, but came up short. It would have been great to pick up a couple of runs in that situation."

Paola reached on a Louisburg error to open the bottom of the seventh, the Panthers then singled and both runners stole a base to get on second and third with no outs. Smith was able to get a strike out, but the Panthers eventually singled to score both runs.

Dalton Stone started the game for Louisburg and went three innings and struck out a pair of batters. Smith came on in relief and pitched just over three innings and struck out six to keep the Wildcats in the game.



Louisburg third baseman Dalton Stone makes a throw to first base

**during the Wildcats'
regional tournament
game in Paola.**

“Stone and Smith both threw well,” McGhee said. “They did a good job pitching against the hitters they faced and were selective with their pitches. Both did a good job working around the zone, and did not leave many pitches to be hit hard. However, we gave away some free bases that hurt us, but with good hitters at the plate working zone is necessary.

“It was great to have Smith available, as he was unable to play against Spring Hill, but when called upon he came out and gave it everything he had.”

Paola struck first as it scored a run in the bottom of the first to take an early lead, but the Wildcats came right back with a run in the second as Blake Ruder singled home Smith to tie the game.

The Panthers took the lead back with another run in the bottom of the third, but again, Louisburg responded. Ruder led off the fourth inning with a double and then came around to score on a single from Schneider.

Dunn, Smith and Ruder all had two hits to lead the Wildcat offense and Ruder’s double was the lone extra base hit for Louisburg.