# Spring Hill takes two from Louisburg on Senior Night



**Louisburg senior Garrett Caldwell tags out a Spring Hill runner in a cloud of dust during the Wildcats' game with the Broncos on May 7 at Lewis-Young Park. Caldwell and fellow senior Nate Swenson were both honored during a Senior Night ceremony.**

As Garrett Caldwell and Nate Swenson made their way onto the Lewis-Young Park field for the second game of a doubleheader with Spring Hill, they both knew it would be the final time they would step foot on their home dirt.

The Louisburg seniors were certainly going to make the most of it.

After Louisburg fell to Spring Hill 14-4 in the opener, both players did all they could to try and get a win in their final game, but came up just short in a 6-5 loss on May 7.

In between games, Caldwell and Swenson were both honored with their parents during a Senior Night ceremony for recognition for what they gave to the program.

Both players gave it all they had in their final home game.



**Nate Swenson winds back for pitch during the Wildcats' second game with Spring Hill on May 7.**

Caldwell went for 2-for-4 with a pair of singles, an RBI and a stolen base, while Swenson also had a single to go along with four innings of relief work. He gave up just two unearned runs in four innings on four hits.

Spring Hill opened the second game with a 3-run first inning, but the Wildcats struck back with a pair of runs in the bottom of the frame on a 2-run double from junior Noah Larson that scored Caldwell and Garrett Harding.

Louisburg (7-13) trailed Spring Hill 6-3 in the sixth inning when the Wildcats cut into the Broncos' lead once again. Caldwell singled home Logan McClellan, and then two batters later, Larson drove home this third run when he singled home Caldwell.

Unfortunately, the Wildcats could get no closer as they ended their regular season with a loss.

Larson led the Louisburg offense with a three hit performance, including a double and 3 RBIs. Michael Rogers and McClellan also had a pair of hits for the Wildcats.

In the opener, the Wildcats found themselves down three runs to Spring Hill in the third inning, only to make a rally with one big swing of the bat. With the bases loaded, Harding, a sophomore, connected on his first varsity grand slam to give the Wildcats a 4-3 lead.

The lead didn’t last long as the Wildcats committed a pair of errors that led to eight Spring Hill runs in the top of the fourth inning and Louisburg trailed 10-4 and would get no closer.

Rogers and Harding each led the Louisburg offense with a pair of hits. Jakob Krause had a pair of stolen bases and Rogers added another.

Although its regular season came end, the postseason is just beginning for Louisburg. The Wildcats are the No. 4 seed in the Fort Scott regional tournament and they will meet No. 1 seed Paola at 2 p.m. today.

If the Wildcats advance, they will meet the winner of Spring Hill and Fort Scott in the regional championship game at 5 p.m.

# Ottawa hits five home runs to sweep Louisburg baseball



**Louisburg sophomore Madden Rutherford makes a pitch Tuesday during the first game of the Wildcats' doubleheader with Ottawa.**

OTTAWA – The Louisburg baseball team hit the road for the final time in the regular season Tuesday when it traveled to Ottawa for a doubleheader.

It didn't go as the Wildcats would have hoped as they fell 11-4 and 12-1 to Ottawa and are now 7-11 on the season.

Louisburg nearly picked up a win in the opener as it took an early 3-1 lead into the fourth inning before the Cyclones struck for three runs in the fourth inning to take a one run lead.

The Wildcats tied the game in the fifth inning when Madden Rutherford opened the inning with a double and then scored on a single by Garrett Harding. That momentum didn't last long as Ottawa scored a run in the bottom of the fifth and then scored six times in the sixth to seal the win.

Rutherford got the start for Louisburg and limited Cyclones to five runs over five innings and struck out four. Harding led the Wildcat offense with a pair of hits to go along with 3 RBIs.

Jakob Krause, Beckett Rasmussen and Logan McClellan each finished the game with two hits, while Krause and Garrett Caldwell each added a double to their line.

Louisburg had a tough time keeping in the Cyclones in the park as Ottawa combined for five home runs between the two games, including three in the nightcap, in which the Cyclones jumped out to a 9-1 lead after two innings and never looked back.

Harding had two of the three Wildcat hits in the second game and Krause added the other. For the game, Ottawa pounded out 11 hits to go along with its 12 runs.

The Wildcats will try and end their regular season on a good note today when they host Spring Hill for a senior night doubleheader. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.

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# Krause helps Louisburg to split of Anderson County



**Louisburg shortstop Nate Swenson turns a double play Thursday during the Wildcats' home doubleheader with Anderson County at Lewis-Young Park. The Wildcats won the opener 8-0, before falling in the second game.**

Coming off a pair of losses to De Soto earlier in the week, the Louisburg baseball team needed a little pick-me-up.

And Jakob Krause was able to give it to them.

Krause pitched a complete game shutout Thursday in the doubleheader opener against Anderson County at Lewis-Young Park and helped the Wildcats to an 8-0 victory to get back on the winning track.

The Wildcats were unable to get the sweep as they lost, 3-0, in the nightcap. Still, the Wildcats had plenty of positives to build on, especially in the opener.

Krause, a junior, pitched seven innings and allowed no runs on six hits and struck out three batters as he gave the Wildcat pitching staff some much-needed rest.

Louisburg’s offense did its job in backing him up as it scored eight runs on eight hits and took advantage of five Anderson County errors. Krause helped his own cause as he finished with a pair of hits and 2 RBIs.

Sophomore Madden Rutherford also drove in a pair of runs and had two hits to help the Wildcats. Catcher Chase Norton finished with two singles and senior Garrett Caldwell recorded 2 RBIs on a single in the bottom of the fourth inning.

Sophomore Garrett Harding added an RBI and Michael Rogers finished with a double. Gabe Rader and Logan McClellan each scored a pair of runs.



**Beckett Rasmussen makes contact with a pitch Thursday against Anderson County.**

The Wildcats (7-9) took a 3-0 lead into the fourth inning where it scored three more times and added two more runs in the sixth to seal the win.

Louisburg had a difficult time getting anything going in the nightcap as Anderson County shutdown the Wildcats' offense. Anderson County scored single runs in the third, fourth and sixth innings to pull away. The Bulldogs also took advantage of four Wildcat errors.

Jakob Krause, Andrew Krause, Noah Larson, Rutherford and Beckett Rasmussen each singled for the Wildcats in the loss.

Larson got the start for Louisburg and kept the Wildcats in the game as he pitched six innings and gave up just one earned

run on four hits and struck out two.

Louisburg returns to action today when it travels to Ottawa for a doubleheader as it is the Wildcats’ lone contests of the week. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.

## De Soto blanks Louisburg

Louisburg had a tough time with the De Soto pitching staff last Tuesday at 3&2 Baseball Complex in Lenexa.

The Wildcats found themselves on the wrong end of a pair of shutouts against De Soto. Louisburg lost the opener, 4-0, and fell in the nightcap, 9-0.

Sophomore Madden Rutherford started the opener and tried to keep the Wildcats’ in it. He pitched complete game and gave up two earned runs on eight hits and struck out two.




**Louisburg catcher Chase Norton tracks down a De Soto player on a rundown last Tuesday.**

De Soto’s Conner Mackay was tough on the Wildcats as he struck out 13 batters in the complete game shutout and limited Louisburg to two hits, which were singles by Beckett Rasmussen and Logan McClellan.

The nightcap was much of the same for Louisburg as De Soto jumped out to a 5-0 lead after three innings and never looked back. Jakob Krause had a pair of singles to lead the Louisburg offense, while Rutherford added a double. Garrett Harding also singled as the Wildcats totaled four hits.

# Louisburg sweeps Osawatomie, Wildcats on 3-game win streak



**Louisburg sophomore pitcher Garrett Harding was one of three Wildcats to earn a win this past week after Louisburg swept Osawatomie on Thursday and split with Baldwin on April 17.**

The Louisburg baseball team spent the first two weeks of the season away from home and finally had a chance to host a pair of doubleheaders Thursday against Osawatomie and April 17 against Baldwin.

After splitting two games with Baldwin, the Wildcats put together the right combination of pitching and offense against Osawatomie as Louisburg earned the sweep at Lewis-Young Park with a 10-0 and 15-2 victory.

The Wildcats, which took three of four games on the week, evened their record to 6-6 on the season and are now riding a 3-game winning streak.

“Getting the wins was a great way to build some momentum as we are set to play a competitive De Soto team this week,” Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. “We had great defensive and offensive play that allowed us to have a successful week.”

Juniors Jakob Krause and Noah Larson each got complete game victories against Osawatomie and kept the Trojan hitters off-balance.

Krause pitched five innings in the opener and gave up just two hits and struck out eight batters. He found himself in a tough situation in the first inning as Osawatomie loaded the bases, but he got out of the inning by stranding all three runners.

Larson pitched five innings in the nightcap and gave up two earned runs on five hits and also struck out five batters.




**Louisburg junior Jakob Krause pitched a complete game shutout Thursday against Osawatomie.**

“Krause and Larson both threw very well against Osawatomie,” McGhee said. “Jakob started off the first inning well with a strikeout and a pop-up, however the pop-up was dropped. At that point you could tell that he was trying to take things into his own hands and was a bit shaken. When he came out in the second, he settled down and took control of the game. He got ahead early in counts and threw strikes consistently. We

can’t ask any more of our pitchers.

“Larson filled up the zone in the second game as well. He worked ahead and allowed the defense to work behind him. He got the leadoff batter out in four of the five innings. It built confidence for Larson and for our defense. He threw first pitch strikes to a majority of the batters that he faced and made Osawatomie work to get runs by getting hits.”

Louisburg’s offense also had a big fourth inning in each game.

The Wildcats broke open a scoreless contest in the opener with a 9-run fourth inning and took advantage of three Osawatomie errors and were hit by a pitch twice.

Larson led the Wildcat offense with a pair of hits, scored twice and had an RBI. Sophomore Garrett Harding had a big 2-run single in the fourth inning, while Krause, Chase Norton, Garrett Caldwell, Madden Rutherford and Michael Rogers also had RBIs.

In the nightcap, Louisburg jumped out to a 4-1 lead and then scored two more runs in the third and broke the game open with another 9-run fourth inning. The Wildcats scored their 15 runs on 15 hits and were also helped by six Osawatomie errors.

Harding had a big day at the plate as he finished 3-for-4 with a double and 3 RBIs. Larson and Caldwell also finished with a pair of hits as both had a triple and Larson had 2 RBIs.

Rogers and Rutherford also had two hits each, while senior Nate Swenson finished with 2 RBIs.

“As a team we had a good approach at the plate,” McGhee said. “We strung together series of hits and moved runners around the bases. We advanced runners on steals and hit and runs, and saw a majority of our base runners cross the plate. A big part of our success was putting the ball in play and we limited the number of strikeouts. We gave ourselves a chance and had some

hard hit balls rather than losing opportunities to strikeouts.

“The big innings were great. We’ve been on both sides of them this season and have felt both the positive and negative impacts. It is great to be on the positive side and build momentum that pushes us out front. Our guys feed off the energy that builds and do a great job of taking advantage of those moments.”

Louisburg will try to keep its winning streak alive when it returns to action Tuesday as it travels to De Soto for a doubleheader. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.

## Louisburg earns split with Baldwin

In its home opener on April 17, Louisburg faced a little adversity as the Wildcats lost the first game of their doubleheader with Baldwin, 12-0.

The nightcap, however, was a different story as the Wildcats had two big innings that propelled them to a 10-1 victory over the Bulldogs.

Sophomore Garrett Harding calmed the waters for Louisburg as he allowed just one run on three hits and also struck out a pair of batters.

“Garrett helped establish how game two was going to end,” Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. “He threw two 1-2-3 innings, got the leadoff batter out in five innings, and had two innings that he threw 13 or fewer pitches. He challenges each batter he faces, making the batters work to get hits. He steps on the rubber and throws hard – a pretty no non-sense approach. He does a good job locating his pitches, allowing the defense to back him up.”



**Louisburg junior Noah Larson connects for a base hit on April 17 against Baldwin at Lewis-Young Park.**

The Wildcat offense gave Harding an early lead to work with as they scored four runs in the first inning and added six more in the sixth to all but seal the win.

Harding helped his own cause as he led the Wildcat offense with three hits and 3 RBIs, while Garrett Caldwell had a single, a double and 2 RBIs and Nate Swenson also had a pair of hits.

Beckett Rasmussen also finished the game with two hits, while Chase Norton and Jakob Krause each had a double.

“Things went south quick in the first game against Baldwin,” McGhee said. “We gifted several extra outs and Baldwin took full advantage of them and their bats came alive. They had some hard hit balls to the gaps and ran the bases well. We

could have kept our heads down in game two, but the guys bounced back. They were not going to stay down and got a big win for us.”

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# Wellsville sweeps Louisburg baseball



**Louisburg second baseman Michael Rogers looks in a throw while a Wellsville runner tries to steal a base Thursday in Wellsville. Louisburg came up short in the doubleheader as they suffered a pair of losses, 5-1 and 11-7.**

WELLSVILLE – The road wasn’t too kind to the Louisburg High School baseball team Thursday when it traveled to Wellsville for a doubleheader.

The Wildcats just didn’t have enough pitching to keep up with the Wellsville bats.

Wellsville chipped away at the Wildcats in the opener and eventually pulled away for a 5-1 victory. Louisburg had a five-run lead late in the nightcap, but the Eagles responded for 10 runs in two innings to steal an 11-7 win from the Wildcats.

In the opener, Louisburg (3-5) took a 1-0 lead in the top of the second inning after three straight walks and Gabe Rader eventually came around to score on a groundout by Beckett Rasmussen.

That would be all the offense the Wildcats could muster as they recorded five hits overall on singles from Jakob Krause, Garrett Caldwell, Madden Rutherford, Garrett Harding and Chase Norton.

Krause got the start for Louisburg and pitched 2 1/3 innings and gave up three runs, but just one of them were earned as the Wildcats committed four errors in the game. Logan McClellan pitched three innings of relief and gave up another earned run, before Andrew Krause pitched the final inning.

Wellsville tied the game in the bottom of the second and then scored two more in the third and one in the fifth and sixth innings to seal the win.

Louisburg was able to get the bats going in the second game as they took a one-run lead into the top of the fifth inning and scored more four more times to go up 6-1.

In that inning, Louisburg took advantage of two Wellsville errors and a walk to load the bases. Nate Swenson reached on another Wellsville error to score Caldwell.

Norton then came through with an RBI single to score Rutherford and Michael Rogers singled home two more runs to give Louisburg a five-run lead.



**Louisburg catcher Chase Norton tags out a leaping Wellsville runner Thursday.**

That lead didn’t last long as Wellsville responded with six runs in the bottom of the fifth and four more in the sixth to take a 11-6 lead. Louisburg added a run in the seventh, but the Wildcats could get no closer.

Rogers led the Wildcat bats in the nightcap with a pair of singles and 2 RBIs, while Rutherford and Caldwell each had a double. Norton also had two RBIs for Louisburg.

Noah Larson started the game for Louisburg and struck out six batters in four innings of work, while giving up six earned runs. Andrew Krause pitched the final two innings for the Wildcats.

Louisburg will try and snap its four-game losing streak

tonight when it hosts Baldwin for its home opener at Lewis-Young Park. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.

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# Wildcats fall to Eudora in walkoff fashion



**Louisburg sophomore Madden Rutherford makes a pitch Tuesday during the Wildcats' doubleheader at Eudora. The Wildcats fell in walkoff fashion in the opener, 11-10, and lost the nightcap 9-6.**

EUDORA – For six innings, everything seemed to being going right for the Louisburg baseball team.

Louisburg had a 5-run lead going into the final inning of play Tuesday in Eudora and appeared to have a win all wrapped up.

Unfortunately for the Wildcats, it didn't have a happy ending.

Eudora rallied for six runs in the seventh inning and came away with an 11-10 walkoff win over Louisburg and took that momentum into the nightcap. The Cardinals started the second game with nine straight runs, and despite a late rally of their own, the Wildcats fell 9-6 and left Eudora with a pair of losses.

Louisburg (3-3) got a strong start in the opener from sophomore Madden Rutherford as he took the game into the fifth inning and gave up four earned runs and also struck out four.

In turn, the Wildcat offense backed him up as they scored three runs in the first, two in second, fourth in the fourth and one in the fifth to take a 10-5 lead.

Jakob Krause relieved Rutherford in the fifth, finished off the inning and pitched a strong sixth before running into trouble in the seventh when Eudora started finding holes and the Wildcats couldn't stop the bleeding.

"Our defense struggled to support Rutherford's effort in the first game," Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. "The mound becomes a very tough and lonely place to be when extra outs are provided to the offense."




**Louisburg first baseman Noah Larson gets ready to make a**

**tag on a runner Thursday.**

Senior Garrett Caldwell led the Wildcat bats with a four-hit performance to go along with 2 RBIs. Nate Swenson and Rutherford both had 2-hit games and had 2 RBIs. Rutherford recorded a triple and Swenson added a double to his line.

Junior Beckett Rasmussen also finished with 3 RBIs and fellow junior Noah Larson finished with a double.

In the nightcap, Eudora picked up right where it left off as it scored three runs in the first and second inning to take a 6-0 advantage and then tacked on three more in the sixth to grab a 9-0 lead into the final inning.

The Wildcats certainly didn't back down as they scored six times in the seventh. Larson and Garrett Harding each had base hits that scored runs. Louisburg also scored thanks to two Eudora errors and a wild pitch to help get them back in the game.

Chase Norton and Rutherford led the Louisburg offense with three hits each, while Caldwell, Larson, Harding and Michael Rogers each finished with an RBI.

"Offensively things went well, we made solid contact and moved around the base path," McGhee said. "We took a few chances to try and get things started in the second game and showed great hustle in those plays, but Eudora's defenders made plays to get outs. As a team we took advantage of Eudora's mistakes in the top of the seventh and fought till the end."

After Eudora jumped out to a big lead, Harding came in for relief and calmed things down as he pitched four innings and gave up three earned runs on just four hits.

"Rutherford and Harding pitched quality games," McGhee said. "Both filled up the zone and got the ground balls and fly balls we wanted. Neither gave up many hard hit balls. Harding

came in the second game and threw three shutout innings and was very efficient and had quality defensive support.”

Louisburg will try and bounce back today when it travels to Wellsville for a doubleheader. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.

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# Wildcats pound out 37 runs in sweep of Prairie View



**Louisburg’s Jakob Krause was one of several Wildcats who found success at the plate Thursday against Prairie View. Louisburg earned the sweep over the Buffalos and are now 3-1 to start the season.**

LA CYGNE – Up and down the lineup, the hits kept coming and there wasn’t much Prairie View could do to stop it, either.

The Louisburg bats came alive Thursday during a doubleheader at Prairie View High School as the Wildcats pounded out 37 runs on 23 hits in a sweep of the Buffalos.

Louisburg rolled to a 19-3 victory in the opener, and the hits didn’t stop in the nightcap as the Wildcats picked up where they left off in an 18-2 win. It was night where everyone got

in on the action.

“Everyone came ready to play,” Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. “We started off early and continued to plate runs inning after inning.  It was a fun night to be a part of and the team enjoyed it. We started the game by plating 11 runs, which can make you a bit nervous, knowing that you might head to the field to relax. But the guys came out and had a great focus in the field. They put together two very good games.”

Although several Wildcats contributed offensively, none was bigger than Garrett Caldwell. The Louisburg senior had three hits in the first game that included an inside-the-park home run and a triple, which led to 7 RBIs.

Caldwell finished with five hits and 9 RBIs between the two games, and his 3-run inside-the-park home run helped propel the Wildcats (3-1) to an 11-run first inning to start the doubleheader.

“Garrett had a solid performance,” McGhee said. “He was seeing the ball well and made solid contact. He had some hard hit balls to the gap that allowed runners to move extra bases. He also showed great hustle on the base path himself, stretching a deep line drive to center into a home run and following that up with a triple later in the game.”

Jakob Krause, Beckett Rasmussen, Chase Norton and Madden Rutherford each had 2 RBIs in game one. Rutherford scored his on a 2-run home run in the fourth inning to help seal the win for Louisburg.

Rutherford also picked up the win for the Wildcats as he pitched four innings and gave up just two earned runs to go along with six strikeouts.

The strong hitting continued in game two as Louisburg scored two runs each in the first two innings, and then broke the game open with a 5-run third and a 7-run fourth to put the

game away.

Michael Rogers and Nate Swenson each had 3 RBIs to lead the Wildcats in the nightcap and Rogers had the Wildcats' lone extra base hit with a double. Caldwell and Garrett Harding each had a pair of RBIs.

"Our offensive performance was contagious," McGhee said. "Once we got momentum going it started to spread. We had good approaches at the plate and put ourselves in position to get the pitches we wanted to see. We had timely hits and took advantage of the extra outs we were given."

Krause provided the Wildcats with another strong start as he went four innings and gave up just one earned run. Swenson finished the game by pitching the fifth inning and struck out the side.

"Our pitchers came out and threw well," McGhee said. "They filled up the zone and gave the defense the opportunity to work behind them. We hit a few patches that we struggled to find the zone, but battled back to get outs."

Louisburg will try and keep its winning streak alive today when it travels to Eudora for a doubleheader. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.

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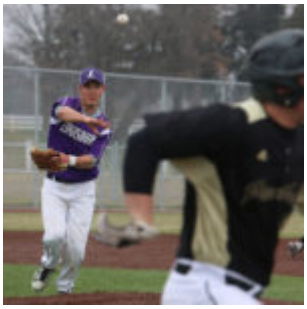
# Wildcats earn split in season opener with Paola



**Louisburg third baseman Garrett Caldwell throws out a runner during the Wildcats season opener last Thursday in Paola. Caldwell and the Wildcats won the nightcap, 9-5, to earn a split with Paola.**

PAOLA – The Louisburg baseball team watched as Paola rolled its way to a 17-0 win in the opener of the two teams' doubleheader Thursday in Paola.

It was a sight that left the Wildcats a little frustrated.

Fortunately, Louisburg didn't have to wait long to redeem itself.

The Wildcats used a four-run fifth inning to break open a tie game and Louisburg held on for a 9-5 victory in the nightcap to earn the split. It was a game that was supposed to be played in Louisburg, but had to be moved due to field conditions.

"We have started out the past few seasons in a similar fashion, so pushing through and getting the victory in the second game was big," Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. "We responded very well. In the first game we got hurt by several errors and struggled to put the ball in the strike zone. Offensively, we were unable to build any momentum.

"In the second game we cleaned things up defensively and improved our approach at the plate. Our pitchers filled up the zone and our defense performed very well behind them. We took advantage of the opportunities we had with runners on base and

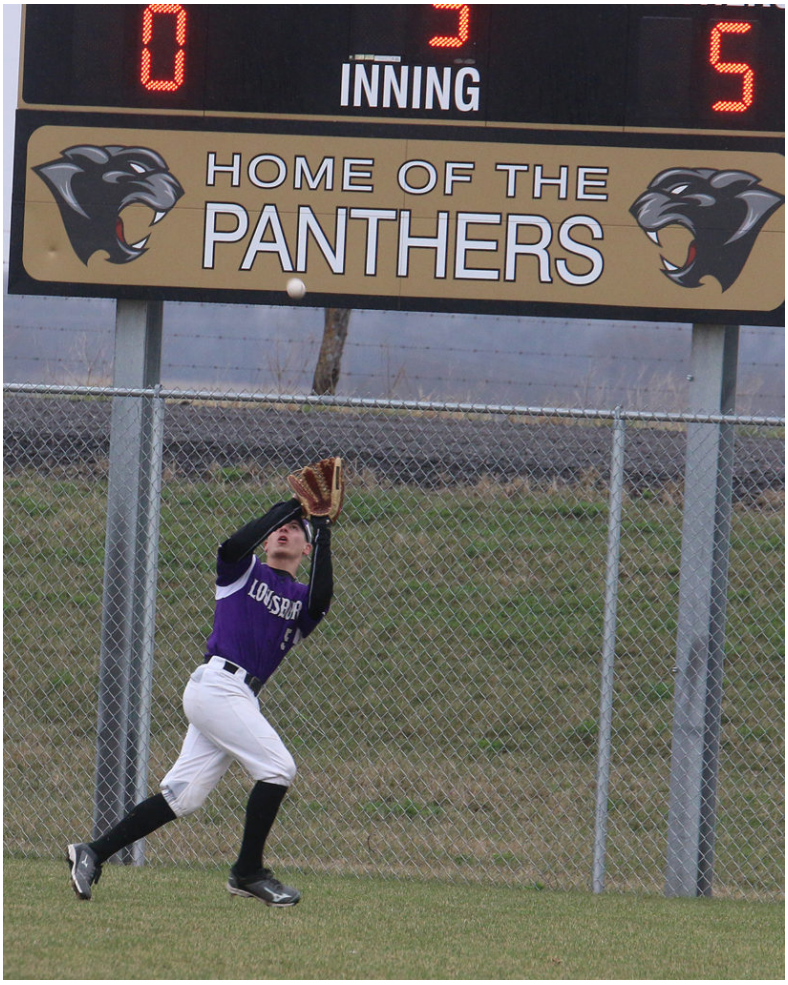
capitalized on several passed balls and errors.”

In the second game, Louisburg overcame an early 2-0 deficit with four runs in the third inning and then added another in the fourth before putting the game away in the fifth.

Junior Noah Larson led the Wildcat offense with a pair of hits and an RBI, but Louisburg got contributions from up and down its lineup. Six different Wildcats had hits and/or drove in a run.

Beckett Rasmussen, Garrett Caldwell, Garrett Harding, Chase Norton, Larson and Jakob Krause each had RBIs, while Krause had the team’s lone extra base hit with an RBI double in the team’s big fifth inning. Logan McClellan and Madden Rutherford also recorded base hits.

“The fifth inning was big,” McGhee said. “We capitalized on several errors and passed balls and had several timely hits. We showed some selflessness and moved runners into scoring position and made some good things happen. It was a great response to the top of the inning.”




**Louisburg outfielder Beckett Rasmussen chases down a fly ball Thursday against Paola.**

Rutherford started the game for Louisburg as he pitched 4 1/3 innings and gave up four earned runs, while striking out three in what was a cold, rainy and windy day.

After Rutherford got into trouble in the fifth inning when Paola scored three times to tie the game, Krause came in to stop the Paola rally. He pitched the final 2 2/3 innings and gave up just one hit during that span and struck out four.

Defense was also big for the Wildcats as they turned two double plays and committed just one error.

“Rutherford and Krause both threw well,” McGhee said. “They filled up the strike zone and allowed the defense to work behind them. Krause came into the game in a tough spot and got

two quick outs to end Paola's rally."

It was a rough first outing in its opener as Paola jumped out to a 5-0 lead after three innings, but the Panthers scored six runs each in the fourth and fifth innings to hand the Wildcats their first loss of the season.

The Wildcats couldn't get a hit off Paola starter Kurt Golubski and reached base just twice on walks from Nate Swenson and Harding, and Norton was hit by a pitch.

"We had multiple 1-2-3 innings and saw only three men get on base," McGhee said. "Golubski had a solid performance for Paola and we struggled to get things moving."

Louisburg returns to action this Thursday when it travels to Prairie View for another doubleheader. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.

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# Caldwell, Swenson to lead young Wildcat baseball team



**Shortstop Nate Swenson is one of two seniors on this season's Louisburg baseball team as the Wildcats said goodbye to seven starters off of last year's team. Louisburg opens its season Thursday with a doubleheader in Paola.**

It is never easy when a team loses seven starters and two of its top pitchers from a season ago, but that is the challenge the Louisburg baseball team will face in 2018.

The Wildcats lost three all-Frontier League players to graduation in leadoff hitter Korbin Hankinson, along with pitchers Grant Harding and Dalton Stone, who is currently pitching for Ottawa University.

Still, the cupboard is not bare.

Louisburg will return a pair of senior starters in first baseman Garrett Caldwell and shortstop Nate Swenson to help guide what is young group of Wildcats this season after finishing last year with a 7-14 record.

“Practices have been going well and we are ready to get the season going,” Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. “Everyone has put in a lot of work over the past few weeks and we are looking forward to getting into competition.”

Caldwell is the team’s top returning offensive player as he earned second team all-Frontier League honors last season at the utility spot. He led the Wildcats with a .396 batting average to go along with two home runs, three doubles, a triple and 14 RBIs.

Swenson also figures to be a fixture in the Louisburg lineup after driving in 12 runs and recording five doubles last year.

Those two Wildcats aren’t the only ones with varsity experience as sophomore Madden Rutherford (third base) and junior Beckett Rasmussen (catcher) all started several games last season, but each hit over .300 in limited action.

“We are looking for these guys to be significant contributors this season,” McGhee said of his four returners. “Garrett had a great year and we are hoping that this season brings similar

success to what he saw at the plate last season.

“Swenson started every game at shortstop and threw quality innings in relief last season. He will see time at shortstop again this season and will be a key contributor in the starting rotation. Rasmussen caught several games last season and brings a lot of versatility to the team, both at the plate and in the field. Rutherford contributed significantly as part of the starting rotation and at third base, and we are looking for him to do that again this year.”



**Senior Garrett Caldwell led the Wildcat offense last season with a .396 batting average and a pair of home runs.**

Louisburg will have a lot of flexibility when it comes to the field as some positions go three-deep on the depth chart.

Caldwell, junior Noah Larson and sophomore Garrett Harding

could all see time at first base, while junior Chase Norton, Rasmussen and Harding could all see time behind the plate at catcher.

Swenson will be a fixture at shortstop, while Rasmussen, Michael Rogers, Gabe Rader and Cole Williams could all see time at second base. Rutherford, Caldwell and Andrew Krause will all play third base.

In the outfield, junior Jakob Krause will man center, while junior Logan McClellan, sophomore Andrew Krause, Rasmussen and Rader will all see time in corner spots.

“Our lineup will be fairly flexible this season,” McGhee said. “Depending upon who is pitching or who has the hot bat, the lineup could vary significantly. We have options and have several versatile players, which allows us to be more fluid than we have been in the past few seasons.”

On the mound, Swenson and Rutherford are the team’s two returning pitchers from a season ago, but the Wildcats will look to several others to help bolster their staff. Larson, Jakob Krause and McClellan all figure to throw several innings.

“Aside from Swenson and Rutherford our pitching staff has yet to get experience at the varsity level,” McGhee said. “We have several that we know will bring quality pitching performances this season. Noah, Jakob and Logan have all contributed with quality outings the past two seasons at the junior varsity level. We are looking forward to what these three will contribute this season, knowing they have progressed in their pitching abilities over the past seasons. Each has seen success that we are looking to bring to the varsity level.”

Louisburg was scheduled to open its season with a doubleheader at home Thursday against Paola, but the games have been moved to Paola due to wet field conditions. First pitch is still set for 4:30 p.m.

# OPINION: 2017 was a banner year for Louisburg



Having the opportunity to cover Louisburg High School athletics, for what has been almost 10 years now, I have seen a lot of different highs and lows.

I have been lucky enough to cover state championship teams and watched several athletes perform at the highest level. However, this last year has to be one for the record books when it comes to success at Louisburg High School.

For Wildcat athletics, 2017 was a banner year for many reasons.

Louisburg qualified for the state tournament in three different sports – volleyball, girls soccer and boys basketball – and the first two each placed in the top four.

The volleyball team was just a point away from winning the school's first state title after the Lady Cats finished second to defending state champion Rose Hill, and tied for the best finish in school history.

The Wildcat girls soccer team qualified for the state semifinals in just its second year of existence and suffered a heartbreaking 1-0 loss in the semifinals to eventually take fourth overall.

In boys basketball, the Wildcats qualified for the state tournament for the first time in 12 years despite getting knocked out in the first round by defending state champion Bishop Miege.

Most schools would love to have that success with their athletic programs, but for Louisburg, that was just the tip of the iceberg. As special as the seasons were for those three programs, the Wildcats also thrived in a few other sports.

Louisburg's cross country program, which has been around for 19 years, had the best season in its history – by far. Not only did the Wildcats have three state medalists for the first time ever, but it had a year that featured the school's first female league champion in Trinity Moore and the best league finish by a male, Wyatt Reece, who took second.

Tim Smith continued the Wildcat success as he became the school's first regional cross country champion, and Moore, Reece and Smith each went on to win a state medal. Moore and Smith also set school records for the fastest time.

The Wildcats also qualified the girls team for the first time in school history as Moore, Carlee Gassman, Reilly Alexander, Isabelle Holtzen, Kaitlyn Lewer, Payton Shaffer and Emily Williams took third at regionals and eventually 10th at state.

The Wildcat wrestling team tied a program best by qualifying eight for the state tournament and came back with a medal by Ryan Adams, who finished sixth.

Louisburg's track and field team persevered and qualified for state in 10 events and had two regional champions in Quinn Rigney and Chris Williams. Isabelle Holtzen and T.J. Dover each brought home their first state track medals.

The boys soccer team was one goal away from making its second consecutive trip to the state semifinals, but their run was halted by a loss to McPherson in state quarterfinals. Still,

the Wildcats won a regional title, which was the seventh in team history.

Freshman Calvin Dillon led the Wildcat golf team this past year and recorded the program's first state medal in more than decade as he took 10th overall.

All these things and more I described in detail when releasing my top 10 stories of the year and what a year it was.

Obviously, I haven't had a chance to look through all the results, but I can't imagine a more successful year for LHS when you are talking about athletics. There may have been years in the 70s, 80s and 90s that I don't know about, but I find it hard to imagine one that tops 2017.

Sure, the 2010-11 school year featured two state championship teams in football and boys track and field and that was a fantastic time to be Wildcat, but as far as calendar years go, 2017 was one to remember.

Even outside the sports world, Louisburg High School put together many great accomplishments as the Wildcat Marching Band was selected to participate in the Tournament of Roses Parade and put on a great show for the nation on New Year's Day.

Then in October, the FFA Food Science team of Hallie Hutsell, Faith Seuferling, Addie Katzer and Hattie Harris won a national championship, while Hutsell and Seuferling placed second and third in the nation, respectively.

I don't get a lot of opportunities to cover programs or groups outside the sports world, but these are fantastic accomplishments and deserved to be recognized.

For me, 2017 was a whirlwind. It seemed around every corner, school history was being made and there aren't many schools around the state that can boast about the successes Louisburg

has experienced.

It was an honor for me to cover many of these historic runs in Wildcat history and I hope you all realize how lucky you have it. Louisburg is a school filled with great coaches who care about the student athletes.

Believe me, I know how fortunate I am to be able to be a part of something special and this place is it. If 2018 is half of what 2017 was, it will be a fun ride.

I can’t wait for what 2018 has in store and hopefully you all will follow along to see what these Wildcats can accomplish.