

Changes to classification system will impact Louisburg



Member schools in the Kansas State High School Activities Association sent ripples across the state last week when they passed two proposals that will affect high school athletics beginning in the 2018-19 season.

For football, the two 4A divisions and Class 2-1A have been eliminated. They have been replaced with 32 team classifications in 4A, 5A and 6A, while 3A and 2A will have 48-team classifications. The remaining schools will play in 1A.

The second proposal was for all other sports. Other than football, classes 4A, 5A and 6A will have 36 teams in each division. Classes 3A and 2A will have 64 schools each, while the remaining schools will be in 1A.

The football proposal passed with a vote of 215-73 and the all-sports proposal passed with a 207-145 majority. All of the classes, except 6A and 1A, were in favor.

With those new proposals comes a different playoff system for many of the sports.

Louisburg High School, which is a Class 4A school, will see changes in five sports programs – football, basketball, baseball, softball and volleyball.

In football, Louisburg will no longer have district play as

the playoffs will begin in week nine. Class 4A will play an eight-game regular season and then each side of the state will be seeded in a bracket from 1 through 16, based on their record.

Given the fact the Frontier League currently has nine teams after recently adding three schools in Tonganoxie, Bonner Springs and Piper, the Wildcats will no longer have to play a non-league opponent. De Soto recently chose to leave the Frontier League following the 2017-18 season to join a new league made up of 5A schools.

"Normally we go out in October to Salina, we would redistrict for 2018 and 2019," Louisburg activities director Darin Gagnebin said. "I don't even know that we will have to go cause our league has nine teams, so we would play eight league games and the ninth game gets assigned to you for the playoffs. As of right now in football, we will no longer have any out of conference opponents as long as we maintain nine in the league."

Another change will be in basketball. For the postseason, there will no longer be substates, instead the 18 teams on each side of the state will be bracketed out by record beginning with two play-in games.

From there, the bracket will be sized down to four-team pods, with the higher seed hosting the game. Teams will have to win two games to reach the state tournaments. Pods will be 1-16-8-9 seeds, 4-13-5-12, 2-15-7-10 and 3-14-6-11. The eight pod winners will advance to the state tournament.

"Depending on where we fall, it could increase travel depending on where we are seeded," Gagnebin said. "We could have to drive down to Coffeyville or drive up to Atchison, you just don't know until the end of the year."

Basketball schedules will also be different with the addition of the new league teams in 2018-19. There will no longer be

double round-robin schedules. There will be eight league games, six tournament games and athletic directors will have to find a way to fill the other six.

“We will start in August about building the new league schedule and it will be tough,” Gagnebin said. “One thing you will see is we won’t have double round-robin’s anymore because we can’t play everyone twice. I think there will be traditional rivalries that are held to where we would play those twice due to proximity. Quite frankly, it wouldn’t be smart for Louisburg not to play Paola, Ottawa or Spring Hill twice due to higher attendance numbers and proximity. It will probably increase travel costs because you are playing more non-conference opponents.”

Baseball and softball will be similar as there will no longer be regionals. Like basketball, there will be two play-in games with the same pod structure. The top four overall seeds will each host all games in their pod on the same day.

In volleyball, there will be four substates across the state, broken into eight brackets. There will also be nine teams in each substate, which will require a play-in game. Teams will need to win two games to qualify for state.

Postseasons for wrestling, track, soccer, cross country and golf will remain the same.

However, even with the new changes, the proposals don’t address the competitive balance issue between public and private schools that many members have been talking about for the last several years.

Although he likes the new playoff system, the fact these changes don’t address the problem is one of the reasons Gagnebin voted no on the new proposals.

“It was a shock because I didn’t think it was going to pass,” Gagnebin said. “Other than the playoff system, in my opinion,

it doesn't do anything for Class 4A. All the work that went into splitting 4A into two divisions is now gone. I feel bad for those schools because they put in a ton of work. It doesn't really affect us because we are locked into 4A and we are right in the middle of the pack.

"I didn't see how it benefited Louisburg or 4A, other than the playoffs system where it should ensure you have more competitive teams at state. Since you are seeding them out now, you shouldn't have a substate of teams with losing records. They could have done that without this."

Although private schools like Bishop Miege, which have won several state titles in the last few years, could find itself moving up a classification with the new measures, it isn't a permanent solution according to Gagnebin.

"Enrollment could bump some private schools up a class, but that doesn't fix the problem," Gagnebin said. "Private schools can control enrollment. According to (Miege) they are losing enrollment and could be back in 4A. It doesn't impact the private issue at all and that is why I didn't vote for it. It is not fixing what the 80 percent of athletic directors polled in Kansas asking what the biggest problems in classifications are. It doesn't address the real problem."

Four Louisburg baseball players awarded all-league



Louisburg junior Garrett Caldwell was one of the Wildcats' best hitters last season and for that he earned second team all-Frontier League honors recently. Caldwell was one of four Louisburg players selected to the team.

It may have not had the season it had hoped for, but the Louisburg High School baseball team still had several players that ended the 2017 season strong.

The Wildcats, who finished with a 7-14 record on the season, earned four selections to the all-Frontier League baseball team, including a spot on the second team.

Junior Garrett Caldwell was named to the utility spot on the second team and three other Wildcats earned honorable mention honors. Seniors Dalton Stone, Grant Harding and Korbin Hankinson were each recognized by the Frontier League coaches for their season.

Caldwell led Louisburg with a .396 batting average as he served as one of the team's catchers. Caldwell also had a team-high two home runs to go along with three doubles, a triple and 14 RBIs.



(From left) Louisburg seniors Grant Harding, Dalton Stone and Korbin Hankinson were named to the all-league honorable mention team.

Hankinson was an a honorable mention selection in the outfield as he was the team's starting centerfielder all season. He committed just one error in the 21 games.

At the plate, Hankinson had a good year from the leadoff spot as he batted .366 with a team-high 26 hits, including eight doubles and 12 RBIs.

Harding and Stone were both named to the honorable mention team as infielders.

Stone finished the season with a .318 average to go along with 14 hits, including three doubles and a home run. Harding batted .283 with 17 hits, three doubles and a triple.

In the field, both players committed just five errors on the season, while Harding and Stone were the Wildcats' top two pitchers. Harding led the Wildcats with 27 strikeouts and Stone had 24.

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE BASEBALL

FIRST TEAM

Catcher: Chandler Bloomer, Ottawa, junior

Pitcher: Blaine Hanf, Paola, senior; Zach Curry, Ottawa, senior

Infield: Donovan Sutti, Paola, senior; Keegan Finch, Ottawa, senior; Adam Carlson, Baldwin, senior; Dalton Rankin, Paola, senior

Outfield: Blaine Ray, Ottawa, senior; Josh Craig, Baldwin,

senior; Max Barger, De Soto, senior

Utility/DH: Jack Barger, De Soto, junior

SECOND TEAM

Catcher: Trevor Boehm, Paola, senior

Pitcher: Conner Mackey, De Soto, junior; Trenton Ferguson, Ottawa, senior

Infield: Nash Dreiling, Paola, junior; Kaleb Shaffer, Ottawa, junior; Chance Montgomery, De Soto, senior; Cody Lucas, Spring Hill, junior

Outfield: Khalil Thrasher, Eudora, junior; Peyton Garvin, Eudora, junior; Jackson Burell, Spring Hill, junior

Utility/DH: **Garrett Caldwell, Louisburg, junior**

HONORABLE MENTION

Catcher: Caleb Ostronic, Eudora, junior; Garrett Borth, Baldwin, junior; Tony Slaughter, De Soto, junior

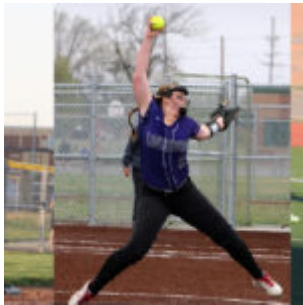
Pitcher: Peyton Garvin, Eudora, junior; Connor Quick, Baldwin, freshman; Caden Bressler, Paola, freshman; Nathan Patterson, De Soto, senior

Infield: **Dalton Stone, Louisburg, senior; Grant Harding, Louisburg, senior;** David Hornberger, Eudora, senior

Outfield: **Korbin Hankinson, Louisburg, senior;** Ty Kempf, De Soto, senior; Sean King, Spring Hill, senior; Monti Enriquez, Eudora, senior

Utility/DH: Brock Huddlestun, Ottawa, senior; Dylan Sanderson, Spring Hill, senior

All-Frontier League baseball, softball and girls soccer



Here are all-Frontier League teams for baseball, softball and girls soccer for the 2016-17 season. Congrats to all the recipients who earned the honors.

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE GIRLS SOCCER

FIRST TEAM

Tarah Phongsavath, De Soto, senior

Bailey Belcher, Louisburg, junior

Aly Hargrove, De Soto, senior

Taylor Cawley, Baldwin, senior

Tanith Beal, De Soto, senior

Mackenzie Scholtz, Louisburg, freshman

Sara Watson, Spring Hill, junior

Madisen Simpson, Louisburg, senior

Josie Boyle, Baldwin, freshman

Maddie Plake, De Soto, senior

Goalie: Taylor Rogers, De Soto, junior

SECOND TEAM

Carmen Rush, De Soto, senior

Kaylen Dawson, Spring Hill, freshman

Anna Burnett, Baldwin, freshman

Mackenzie Mohl, De Soto, freshman

Caitlyn Countryman, Baldwin, sophomore

Anna Watson, Spring Hill, junior

Camdyn Clark, Louisburg, sophomore

Mallory Smith, Spring Hill, sophomore

Morgan Laplante, De Soto, sophomore

Savannah Reinhart, Louisburg, junior

Goalie: Emery Mounce, Spring Hill, freshman

HONORABLE MENTION

Ashley Panagakis, De Soto, sophomore

Amanda Wray, Ottawa, junior

Clara Cowden, Baldwin, senior

Alex Schemmel, De Soto, junior

Goalie: Shay Whiting, Louisburg, junior

Goalie: Riley O'Rourke, Baldwin, senior

Goalie: Sutton Jung, Ottawa, junior

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE BASEBALL

FIRST TEAM

Catcher: Chandler Bloomer, Ottawa, junior

Pitcher: Blaine Hanf, Paola, senior; Zach Curry, Ottawa, senior

Infield: Donovan Sutti, Paola, senior; Keegan Finch, Ottawa, senior; Adam Carlson, Baldwin, senior; Dalton Rankin, Paola, senior

Outfield: Blaine Ray, Ottawa, senior; Josh Craig, Baldwin, senior; Max Barger, De Soto, senior

Utility/DH: Jack Barger, De Soto, junior

SECOND TEAM

Catcher: Trevor Boehm, Paola, senior

Pitcher: Conner Mackey, De Soto, junior; Trenton Ferguson, Ottawa, senior

Infield: Nash Dreiling, Paola, junior; Kaleb Shaffer, Ottawa, junior; Chance Montgomery, De Soto, senior; Cody Lucas, Spring Hill, junior

Outfield: Khalil Thrasher, Eudora, junior; Peyton Garvin, Eudora, junior; Jackson Burell, Spring Hill, junior

Utility/DH: Garrett Caldwell, Louisburg, junior

HONORABLE MENTION

Catcher: Caleb Ostronic, Eudora, junior; Garrett Borth, Baldwin, junior; Tony Slaughter, De Soto, junior

Pitcher: Peyton Garvin, Eudora, junior; Connor Quick, Baldwin, freshman; Caden Bressler, Paola, freshman; Nathan Patterson, De Soto, senior

Infield: Dalton Stone, Louisburg, senior; Grant Harding, Louisburg, senior; David Hornberger, Eudora, senior

Outfield: Korbin Hankinson, Louisburg, senior; Ty Kempf, De Soto, senior; Sean King, Spring Hill, senior; Monti Enriquez, Eudora, senior

Utility/DH: Brock Huddlestun, Ottawa, senior; Dylan Sanderson, Spring Hill, senior

ALL FRONTIER LEAGUE SOFTBALL

FIRST TEAM

Pitcher: Jordan Johnson, Paola, junior; Sarah Brown, Spring Hill, senior

Catcher: Sierra Sanderson, Spring Hill, senior

Infield: Allison Daggett, Paola, senior; Jordan Flakus, Eudora, senior; Kamryn Shaffer, Ottawa, junior; Matti Morgan, Paola, senior

Outfield: Audrey Flowers, Baldwin, sophomore; Sieana Hall, Baldwin, sophomore; McKinley Markley, Baldwin, sophomore

DH/Utility: Regan Smith, Spring Hill, junior

SECOND TEAM

Pitcher: Kayla Etter, Eudora, sophomore; **Allyssa Griggs, Louisburg, senior**

Catcher: Amayah LaTessa, Baldwin, senior

Infield: **Madison Svoboda, Louisburg, sophomore;** Rian Geere, Baldwin, freshman; Mackenzie Smith, De Soto, senior; Betsy Parmeley, Baldwin, senior

Outfield: Elizabeth Hays, Spring Hill, junior; Devon Purcell, Eudora, junior; Jordan Diehl, De Soto, sophomore; Jasmine Thevarajoo, Eudora, senior

DH/Utility: Payton Faddis, De Soto, sophomore

HONORABLE MENTION

Pitcher: Kinley Burton, Baldwin, senior; Mary Kate Hale, Spring Hill, senior

Catcher: Sydney Igert, Paola, junior; **Emalee Overbay, Louisburg, senior**

Infield: Jenna DeVore, Ottawa, junior; Kelsey Kroutch, Spring Hill, senior; **Molly Rison, Louisburg, sophomore;** Kellee Wiggins, Baldwin, sophomore; Lydia Brown, Eudora, freshman

Utility/DH: **Karson Griggs, Louisburg, sophomore;** Peyton Weatherbie, Paola, senior

Spring Hill takes two from Wildcat baseball



Louisburg senior Korbin Hankinson puts a ball in play during a game earlier this season. The Wildcats played their final regular season games on May 8 in Spring Hill and came up short in a 12-2 and 13-8 loss.

It was a rough six days for the Louisburg baseball team.

After getting swept by Ottawa on Senior Night, the Wildcats found themselves on the wrong side of the sweep again on May 8 at Spring Hill. Louisburg fell 12-2 in the opener to the Broncos and then came short in the nightcap in high-scoring affair, 13-8.

The two games ended the Wildcats' regular season with a 7-13 record as they head into the postseason.

Spring Hill jumped on the Wildcats' pitching early in the first game as it scored 11 runs in the first four innings to take a big lead it wouldn't relinquish. Louisburg scored a pair of runs in the fifth when junior Garrett Caldwell tripled home Blake Ruder and Christian Tosterud.

Caldwell led the Wildcat offense with two hits and had a big day at the plate in the doubleheader. He had five hits and 5 RBIs in the two games, including a 2-run home run in the nightcap to give the Wildcats a 2-0 lead early.

The Broncos responded to Caldwell's home run with four runs in the first inning and then six more in the fourth inning to take a 10-2 lead.

Louisburg battled back with six runs of its own in the top of the fifth inning to cut the Spring Hill advantage to two, but the Broncos scored three in the sixth to pull away.

Senior Grant Harding recorded a pair of hits, including a triple and an RBI, to help the Wildcat bats. Tosterud and junior Nate Swenson also finished with two hits, a double and a run batted in each. Beckett Rasmussen also tallied a pair of singles for Louisburg.

Although the Wildcats have lost four in a row, they have a chance to start fresh today when it competes in the Class 4A-Division I regional tournament in Ottawa. Louisburg, the No. 4 seed, will play No. 1 Ottawa at 4 p.m. today.

If the Wildcats advance, they will play the winner of No. 2 Paola and No. 3 Fort Scott later in the evening.

Ottawa dampens Louisburg senior night with sweep



Louisburg senior Blake Ruder runs down a fly ball in right field Tuesday during the Wildcats' game with Ottawa at Lewis-

Young Park. The Wildcats lost both games to the Cyclones on Senior Night, 15-1 and 7-2.

It wasn't the night the seven Louisburg baseball seniors hoped for when they stepped onto the Lewis-Young field for the final time.

Louisburg celebrated Senior Night on Tuesday, but Ottawa decided to dampen those plans. The Cyclones, who are ranked No. 5 in Class 4A-Division I, downed Louisburg 15-1 in the opener and 7-2 in the nightcap.

Despite the loss, it was a special night for seniors Korbin Hankinson, Dalton Stone, Grant Harding, Ben LaJoie, Sam Guetterman, Blake Ruder and Kylan Harper as they were each honored in-between the doubleheader games.

"This senior class brings a lot of experience with them," Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. "They are a hard working group that strive for the best in everything they do. These seniors are a talented group and are passionate about the games they play. These young men will be successful in their pursuits because of the traits that they bring with them."

In the opener, the Wildcats (7-11) took a 1-0 lead into the second inning before the Cyclones scored two in the second and third innings, and then five runs in the fourth and fifth to pull away.



Louisburg seniors (front row, from left) are Blake Ruder, Ben LaJoie, Kylan Harper, Grant Harding, Dalton Stone, Sam Guetterman and Korbin Hankinson.

Louisburg junior Christian Tosterud was perfect at the plate for the Wildcats and drove in their only run. Tosterud, who finished the game with three hits, tripled home Hankinson after he led the first inning off with a double. Hankinson added a pair of hits in the loss.

Stone started the game for Louisburg and pitched three innings, before Harper and Nate Swenson came in for relief. However, none of the three Wildcat pitchers could cool off the Ottawa bats.

“In the first game we started out well, we got on the board first and had some success at the plate,” McGhee said. “Then the struggle to find the strike zone began. Once we started walking batters we couldn’t find our way out of the hole. Ottawa is a solid team and took care of business at the plate and in the field.”

The nightcap started off like the first as Louisburg opened the scoring in the first inning, but this time the Wildcats held their one-run lead into the fifth inning. Ottawa answered with four runs in the fifth and three more in the seventh to earn the sweep.

Harding, Stone and Swenson each had a pair of hits, while Harding added a double to his line. Harding and Mitchell Drew both had RBIs as well for Louisburg.

It was Harding who kept Ottawa scoreless through the first four innings, before Ottawa came through with fourth runs in the fifth. Guetterman came on in relief for the final two frames.

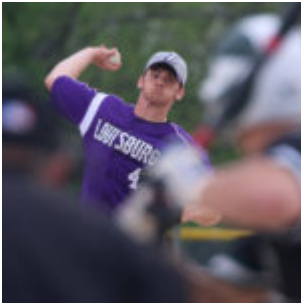
“Ottawa got the hits they needed to get runners on,” McGhee said. “We were unable to get the hits we needed and had several quick innings which helped to build momentum for Ottawa. We responded late in the game, but were unable to overcome the deficit.

“Ottawa is a good team and they take advantage of the little mistakes that are made throughout a game. They executed the plays they were asked to and put us in some spots where a tough play had to be made.”

Louisburg will wind down its regular season today when it travels to Spring Hill for a doubleheader. The Wildcats will then compete in the regional tournament next week at Ottawa.

Wildcats score 29 runs in

sweep of Anderson County



Louisburg senior Grant Harding winds up for a pitch during the Wildcats' April 25 doubleheader against De Soto. The Wildcats defeated Anderson County on Thursday, 12-5 and 17-5.

GARNETT – Apparently all the Louisburg baseball team needed was a trip to Garnett.

It certainly fixed what ailed them.

The Wildcats, who had lost four of their last five games, turned it around in a big way as they scored 29 runs during their doubleheader Thursday, en route to a 12-5 and 17-5 victory over Anderson County.

“The sweep was much needed,” Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. “We’ve had number of close games that took a wrong turn throughout the year and we definitely needed to come out and take both games. We had solid games offensively, and took care of things on defense. When the scores evened out, we put pressure on and added runs as we needed to.”

It was a team effort, especially in the opener, as every player in the Wildcat lineup got a hit and all but one had a run batted in. Louisburg jumped out to a 5-0 lead after three innings and used a five-run sixth to pull away after Anderson County tied it the inning before.

Korbin Hankinson, Christian Tosterud, Garrett Caldwell, Dalton

Stone and Ben LaJoie each had two hits to lead the Wildcats, while Tosterud, Grant Harding, Nate Swenson and Stone all had 2 RBIs. Tosterud and Hankinson both added a double in the win.

"As a team we had great night at the plate," McGhee said. "Overall we combined for a .435 average. Everyone was seeing the ball well, whether they were getting hits or being selective at the plate and drawing walks. We also did a great job on the base paths. We left quite a few runners on base, but managed to get runners on later in the game to make up for those."

Freshman Madden Rutherford started the game for the Wildcats (7-9) and went five innings and gave up two earned runs on seven hits. He ran into a little trouble in the fifth inning when Anderson County tied the game with four runs in the frame, but Swenson came on in relief and pitched two innings and allowed no hits.

The Wildcats got going offensively in the sixth to break open the tie game as Caldwell, Stone, Swenson and Hankinson each had RBI singles to give Louisburg the lead back and all but seal the win.

In the nightcap, Louisburg found itself tied with Anderson County after three innings, but the Wildcats used back-to-back seven run innings to get the run-rule victory.

Hankinson did a lot of damage with the bat in the nightcap. He went 4-for-5 with 5 RBIs, including a pair of doubles. Dalton Stone hit a 2-run home run to break open a tie game in the fourth inning.

Harding, Mitchell Drew and Beckett Rasmussen each had a 2-hit game to lead the Wildcats, while Stone, Drew and Harding each had 2 RBIs. Harding was also busy on the base paths with five stolen bases.

Senior Kylan Harper started the game for Louisburg and pitched

into the fourth inning as he gave up five runs, two earned runs and had three strikeouts. Fellow senior Sam Guetterman came in to record the final two outs to preserve the run-rule victory.

"Madden and Kylan gave us quality starts and put us in the position to win the games," McGhee said. "Rutherford is very efficient when he pitches, and has given us quality starts in each of his outings. Of the 27 batters he faced, 20 of them saw 3 or fewer pitches. We can rely on Harper to give us a solid start and carry us deeper into a game, which helps with managing our pitchers.

"Sam and Nate both made quick work of the batters they faced and Guetterman got us out of a tough spot in game two with four pitches. Both pitchers come in and fill up the zone and let their defense work behind them."

Louisburg returns to action today when it hosts Ottawa on senior night. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m. at Lewis-Young Park.

Louisburg drops two games to De Soto

On April 25, Louisburg hosted De Soto for a doubleheader at Lewis-Young Park and came up short in a 7-3 loss in the opener. The Wildcats forced extra innings in the nightcap, but fell 6-4 in eight innings.

In the second game, the Wildcats were patient at the plate and drew seven walks and turned several of those into runs. Louisburg scored two runs in the sixth to tie the game, but De Soto answered with two in the eighth to get the win.

Although they walked seven times, Louisburg had just five hits, one of which was a double from Mitchell Drew. Freshman Madden Rutherford had a pair of singles and 2 RBIs.

Grant Harding started the nightcap and pitched six innings. He

gave up three earned runs and had three strikeouts. Nate Swenson came in for the seventh and got Louisburg out of a jam to help send it to extra innings.

“Nate threw strikes and worked to quickly to get outs,” Louisburg coach Joel McGhee said. “The defense did a solid job behind him and we had an opportunity to take the game into extra innings. We gave ourselves a chance, but came up short.”

In the opener, Louisburg jumped out to a 3-1 lead before De Soto scored three in the fifth, two in the sixth and another in the seventh to secure the victory.

Junior Garrett Caldwell had a big day at the plate. Caldwell went 3-for-3, including a pair of doubles and an RBI. Swenson also recorded a pair of hits and an RBI.

Senior Dalton Stone pitched into the sixth inning and gave up three earned runs and had three strikeouts.

Three schools to join Frontier League



Three schools have accepted invitations, or will soon, to join the Frontier League for the 2018-19 season and beyond.

Piper, Bonner Springs and Tonganoxie will be leaving their

current home – the Kaw Valley League – to join the Frontier after all three were offered spots during a meeting in early April.

Their addition will now bring the Frontier League to 10 members, along with Louisburg, Paola, Ottawa, Spring Hill, De Soto, Baldwin and Eudora. The trio of schools made presentations to the current Frontier League members for admittance due to the fact the Kaw Valley is in the process of breaking up. Current member Bishop Ward is leaving the league next school year, which leaves them at six.

Piper quickly accepted the invitation following a vote of its board of education and is looking forward to joining the Frontier.

“We are extremely excited to get into a league with like-size schools and competition levels,” Piper High School activities director Doug Key said. “We believe Piper High School is good fit for the league due to the competition level in all activities and will match up well. We have played all current schools in various activities and felt like this would be a positive move for the future.

“Being in a league with various size schools and us being the smallest wasn’t going to be optimal. We are still are competitive in many areas, but we needed to secure a more balanced future. We feel like being in the middle, size-wise, will keep us competitive for years to come.”

According to this year’s classification numbers, Piper has a current enrollment of 601 students. Turner is the Kaw Valley’s biggest school with 1,114 students, followed by Lansing (910), Bonner Springs (758), Basehor-Linwood (710) and Tonganoxie (618).

Bonner Springs, Piper and Tonganoxie compare to other Frontier League programs. De Soto is the biggest school in the league with 854 students, followed by Ottawa (709), Spring Hill

(699), Paola (612), Louisburg (563), Eudora (471) and Baldwin (410).

Bonner Springs' board of education also approved the move to the Frontier League and Bonner Springs High School principal Rick Moulin echoed Key's statement.

"We have competed against teams in the Frontier League the past several years," Moulin said. "The schools in the Frontier League are a lot like Bonner Springs – we are competitive and value sportsmanship. The teams in the Frontier League are similar in size to Bonner Springs, which will be a great gauge for us as we try to compete at the highest level possible in 4A. Bonner Springs is a small town community, with great community support, much like the schools in the Frontier League.

"We are excited to be joining with Piper and Tonganoxie. We hope to continue to be able to compete against Basehor-Linwood, Lansing and Turner. I have a lot of respect for their schools and their programs. Ultimately, the Frontier League was a better fit for our students and our community."

Tonganoxie hasn't officially accepted the invitation, but it is just waiting for its board of education to approve the move during its May 8 meeting. At that point, according to Tonganoxie High School principal Mark Farrar, it will immediately send letter accepting the invite.

"We are very excited to join the Frontier League," Farrar said. "This new partnership will be very good for our students as well as our community. Joining the Frontier League will provide some great opportunities for our students from an athletic and activities standpoint. Tonganoxie mirrors many of the activities that most or all Frontier League schools offer. We see it as a league that will be a good fit for many years to come.

"One of the things that I think gets overlooked is the idea

that a strong league doesn't just offer opportunities on a playing field, but it also offers a chance for kids to network and make lifelong connections with students from all across the league. The Frontier League is a strong and stable league and we believe that it can advance the overall mission of what we want to do at Tonganoxie."

Louisburg High School activities director Darin Gagnebin now believes the league is healthier than ever.

"By adding teams to our league, it solidifies our league numbers for years to come ensuring that we, as a league, will remain strong and competitive whether schools decide to leave or stay," Gagnebin said. "We could have been in a situation in which the Frontier League could have dwindled to four or five schools, but instead we will be stronger at 10 teams, if all teams decided to stay.

That situation came about in March when it was reported by the Tonganoxie Mirror that Kaw Valley League member Lansing wanted to create a larger league that would have contained 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.

A meeting was held between all the schools to look at possibilities of building a stronger league that would rebuild the current Kaw Valley that has Lansing, Turner, Piper, Bonner Springs, Tonganoxie and Basehor-Linwood.

The Frontier League responded with meetings of its own shortly after to discuss each member's happiness in the league after De Soto, Spring Hill and Ottawa attended the March meeting with Lansing.

De Soto mentioned needing more competition at the sub-varsity level since it has a growing enrollment and looked at the possibility of playing in a league with bigger schools since

it has made the jump to Class 5A.

Spring Hill's enrollment also looks to make that jump in three to four years, while Ottawa's enrollment usually hovers around the line between 4A and 5A. Still, all three schools stated during league meetings they were happy in their current position, with De Soto and Spring Hill stating they might need to make a move due to increasing enrollment numbers.

Faced with the possibility of losing at least two members, the Frontier invited Kaw Valley members to make presentations to join the league in order to fill those spots. Piper, Tonganoxie and Bonner Springs all made presentations and the Frontier League principals all offered invitations shortly after.

At this point, it appears the league is going to move forward with 10 members as no school has stated their desire to leave the Frontier – however, it doesn't mean it can't happen in the near future.

"I cannot speak for other schools in the Frontier League about their desire to stay or to leave," Gagnebin said. "I know some are considering their options and will do what they believe is in the best interest of their school, and I would support them in whatever they decide. I do believe though whatever they decide, with the addition of these new schools to our league, the Frontier League will remain solid in numbers and will continue to be one of the most competitive leagues in Class 4A.

"I believe the three schools that chose to petition our league for membership will be a great fit for the Frontier League. They offer all sports and activities that are currently offered by the league at all levels. Their enrollments, though larger than Louisburg, will put them in the middle to upper middle in size within the league."

The league schedule will also look different beginning with

the 2018-19 season, as there will no longer be a double round-robin schedule in certain sports and not every school will play each other in football.

“The biggest challenge will be league scheduling,” Gagnebin said. “Although it will change how we schedule things as a league, most league schools already have some or all of these schools on some of their athletic schedules already. It could increase the amount of non-league games we have to go out and find in some sports, since with 10 teams you can no longer play a double-round-robin schedule as we have currently, due to the amount of games allowed by KSHSAA.

“This is both good and bad, meaning, it could increase travel and some expense, but it allows us greater flexibility in the schedule to play other teams outside the league as well. One negative will be in football. With 10 teams, we will not be able to play every team in the league as we do now. As stated before though, solidifying the league as far as numbers go and increasing the competitiveness of the league are also positives.”

Wildcat bats come alive in splits of Osawatomie, Baldwin



Louisburg junior Garrett Caldwell makes contact with a pitch

on April 18 during the Wildcats' doubleheader in Baldwin City. The Wildcats earned splits over Baldwin and Osawatomie last week.

OSAWATOMIE – It didn't get the sweep it was hoping for, but the Louisburg baseball team left Osawatomie with a victory Thursday and almost added another.

The Wildcats got a big performance at the plate from juniors Christian Tosterud and Garrett Caldwell, and on the mound from senior Kylan Harper, as they led Louisburg to a 6-4 win over the Trojans in the doubleheader opener.

It appeared the Wildcats were going to get a second straight win, but Osawatomie scored eight unanswered runs in the final two innings for an 8-7 victory.

Louisburg (5-7) got off to a quick start in the opener as it scored two runs in the second, two in the third and two more in the sixth to grab a 6-0 lead. Tosterud got the Wildcat offense going as he was 3-for-4 at the plate with a pair of doubles, a home run and 2 RBIs.

Caldwell also added 2 RBIs on two hits, including a double and senior Dalton Stone finished with two hits.

The Wildcats got going in the second inning as Tosterud opened with a double, Mitchell Drew was hit by a pitch and both came around to score on a Caldwell single.

Tosterud came through again in the next inning. Following a single from Grant Harding, Tosterud hit a 2-run home run to put the Wildcats up by four runs.

In the sixth inning, Caldwell opened the frame with a double and then later scored on a passed ball. Harding added a sacrifice fly to score Sam Guetterman and the Wildcats held a 6-0 lead.

Osawatomie scored a run in the sixth and three more in the seventh that were aided by three Louisburg errors, but the Wildcats held on.

Harper pitched six innings for the Wildcats and picked up the win. He gave up two unearned runs on two hits and also had seven strikeouts. Nate Swenson came in for relief in the final inning to close it out.



Louisburg senior Korbin Hankinson runs in for a sliding catch on April 18 against Baldwin.

Louisburg's offense didn't slow down in the nightcap as the Wildcats exploded for five runs in the first inning, one in the third and one in the sixth to take a 7-0 lead.

Freshman Madden Rutherford led the Wildcat bats with three hits and 2 RBIs. Korbin Hankinson, Ben LaJoie and Stone all

added two hits, while Caldwell came through with a pair of RBIs. Tosterud also recorded an RBI double and Hankinson had a run batted in.

Rutherford also pitched well on the mound as he threw five scoreless innings before getting into trouble in the sixth. The Trojans scored five runs in the sixth, before scoring three in the seventh on two hits, two hit batters and an error to complete the comeback.

The Wildcats return to action tonight when it hosts De Soto at Lewis-Young Park and will travel to Garnett on Thursday for a doubleheader against Anderson County.

Louisburg splits doubleheader with Baldwin

Blake Ruder, Garrett Caldwell and Korbin Hankinson gave the Wildcats the offense they were looking for during Louisburg's doubleheader at Baldwin on April 18.

Caldwell and Ruder each finished the opener with three hits, while Hankinson added two more as the Wildcats came through with a 10-run seventh inning to pull away for a 12-7 win over Baldwin.

The nightcap, however, was a different story as the Wildcats' could muster much offense in the 10-0 loss to settle for the split.

Ruder had a big day in the opener as he finished with a double, a triple and 4 RBIs – including a three-run triple in the big seventh inning. Caldwell also had a big hit for the Wildcats as he connected on a 3-run home run in the seventh.

The game was tied at 2-all going into the seventh after a quality performance from Louisburg starter Dalton Stone as he

pitched five innings and gave up one earned run and had three strikeouts.

Sam Guetterman and Kylan Harper came in for relief to finish the game off after Baldwin scored five runs in its half of the seventh inning to make the game interesting.

Stone excited for opportunity with Ottawa



Louisburg High School senior Dalton Stone recently signed his letter of intent to play baseball at Ottawa University. Stone is seated next to mother Annie Goode and stepfather Paul Goode. Standing (from left) is Louisburg coach Joel McGhee and Ottawa assistant coach Zach Gerch.

As Dalton Stone was looking through options of where he wanted to play collegiate baseball, he had his fair share of choices.

Stone scrolled through his email, and read through all his options, but one school stood out among the rest.

The Louisburg High School senior signed his letter of intent on April 13 in front of family and friends to play baseball at Ottawa University. Stone couldn't have been happier with his

decision.

“It is a great feeling to know that I am fortunate enough to play at the collegiate level,” Stone said. “There are kids that work hard every day, but they just don’t have the talent to play college ball and those are the ones you feel bad for, because there are kids out there that have the talent and don’t want to put the work in.

“A lot of NAIA schools were emailing me, but Ottawa is the one that just stuck out for me. I got along with the coaches really well and I just like the environment. I think it will be a great fit for me.”

Stone, a starting pitcher for the Louisburg baseball team, hopes to do the same one day at Ottawa. The coaches informed Stone he will likely start at the junior varsity level as a freshman, but also has the chance to pitch some varsity innings as well.

He knows the competition will be tough to crack the Braves’ rotation, but he is looking forward to the challenge and is ready to get to work.



Dalton Stone brings home a pitch during a game earlier this season.

“As a freshman, they told me that I have the chance to come in and pitch a few innings at the junior varsity and varsity level,” Stone said. “They recruit somewhere around 90 kids, so JV is their developmental team for the varsity and they told me I have a chance to see some varsity time as a freshman if it works out and hopefully I can do that.”

“Since T-ball, I have been in love with the sport. I knew I have always had the ability, but it is about putting the work in and wanting to do it. I know the coaches like what I have, but I just have to go out there and show it.”

Although Stone had different opportunities to play elsewhere, he was sold on the school and program after making two visits. He also realizes that a spot won’t be given to him.

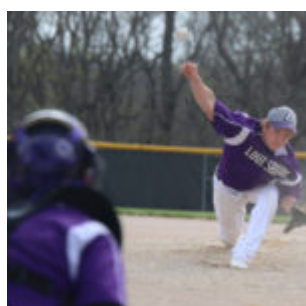
“I really liked both of them,” Stone said of the visits. “I feel that it is going to be a great fit for me. They are doing a lot of heavy recruiting right now and I feel like there are going to be some incoming freshmen that are going to compete and I feel like I am going to be one of those. I am just going to give it my all and see where that takes me.”

Stone currently has 15 strikeouts in his four starts on the season for the Wildcats and has appreciated his time with the Louisburg program and his teammates.

“It has been incredible,” he said. “You can’t take this back. All my teammates have been there for me. I pitch in a lot of games and Blake Ruder has always been there to pick me up and say positive things to me before I go out and start. He just wants me to stay positive, because if I get down then the whole team can get down too so it is great to have that support.”

Stone, the son of Greg Stone and Paul and Annie Goode, plans to major in business while at Ottawa, following graduation in May.

Pitching, offense comes through for Wildcats



Louisburg senior Kylan Harper makes a pitch Thursday during

the first game of the doubleheader with Wellsville at Lewis-Young Park. Harper got the win in the first game and freshman Madden Rutherford earned the victory in the nightcap.

Heading into Thursday's doubleheader against Wellsville, the Louisburg High School baseball team was backed into a corner.

The Wildcats had lost five of their first six games coming in and two of their top starting pitchers were unavailable after going two days earlier. Louisburg was going to need a lot of offense and good work on the mound.

It got both.

Louisburg got two strong starting performances in both games and the offense followed suit as the Wildcats came away with a much-needed 8-5 and 4-3 sweep of Wellsville.

The Wildcats (3-5) got off to a positive start in the opener with three runs in the first inning. Blake Ruder singled home Korbin Hankinson to get Louisburg on the board and Ruder later came around to score on a Wellsville error.

Mitchell Drew singled home Grant Harding a little later to give the Wildcats a 3-0 lead. Wellsville scored a run in the third, but the Wildcats broke the game open in the fourth.

With the bases loaded, Ruder cleared them with a triple to right field as Ben LaJoie, Sam Guetterman and Hankinson all came around to score to make it 6-1. Ruder finished the day with two hits to go along with 4 RBIs.

It turned out to be a big hit as Wellsville scored four times to cut the Louisburg lead to one in the next inning, but the Wildcats responded with two more runs in the fifth to give them enough cushion to close it out.

Senior Kylan Harper got the start in the opener for the

Wildcats and allowed just one run in four innings before running into some trouble in the fifth. In all, he allowed five runs but also had five strikeouts.

Guetterman, another senior, came on in relief for the final two innings and picked up the save after giving up just three hits and struck out two.



Senior Korbin Hankinson sends a hit into the outfield Thursday against Wellsville.

The Wildcats got another big pitching performance – this time it was from a freshman. Madden Rutherford threw a complete game and allowed three runs on four hits and struck out seven in the winning effort.

Louisburg scored on a run in the first on an RBI single from Nate Swenson that scored Ruder and the Wildcats scored again in the second when Rutherford helped his own cause with a

sacrifice fly that scored Christian Tosterud.

Wellsville responded to cut the Louisburg lead to 2-1 in the third, before the Wildcats added another run in the bottom of the inning when Ruder scored again on an RBI grounder from Swenson.

The Eagles tied the game at 3-all in the fourth, but the Wildcats scored the go-ahead run in the fifth when Hankinson led the inning off with a double and then came around to score on a Wellsville error.

It was all Rutherford needed as he struck out four in the final two innings to earn his first high school victory.

Louisburg will try for its third win in a row today when it ventures to Baldwin for a doubleheader. The Wildcats will then travel to Osawatomie for two games Thursday.