# 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.

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# 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.

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# 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.

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# 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 basses 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. They 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.”

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# 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.

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# 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.

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# 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.**

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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