Week 7 Athlete of the Week: Brandon Doles



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

Brandon Doles, Junior, Baseball

Louisburg junior Brandon Doles helped the Wildcat baseball team, both in the field and with the bat, as he guided his team to a 2-1 record last week with wins over Eudora and Wellsville. Against Eudora, Doles pitched a complete game as he allowed just one earned run on three hits. He also added two hits and 2 RBIs at the plate to help Louisburg to a 7-5 win.

Against Wellsville, Doles went 4-for-4 with a double and 4 RBIs in Louisburg's 14-3 win over Wellsville last Thursday. On the season, Doles is currently batting .420 with 29 hits, five doubles and a home run. He also has 23 runs batted in. On the mound, Doles is currently 3-3 on the year with 20 strikeouts and a 3.88 earned run average.

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

Previous winners:

Week 1: Lexi Hampton

Week 2: Kolby Kattau

Week 3: Jaden Vohs

Week 4: Mia Wilson

Week 5: Johnny Eberhart

Week 6: Alyse Moore



Wildcats get road wins over Wellsville, Eudora



Louisburg second baseman George Reichart tries to turn a double play Thursday during the Wildcats' road contest at Wellsville. The Wildcats split with the Eagles and won the

second game, 14-3.

WELLSVILLE – Following a tough game in which Louisburg scored just one run against Wellsville on Thursday, the Wildcats responded in a big way in the second game of the doubleheader.

The Wildcats piled on the runs as they rolled to a 14-3 victory over the Eagles in Wellsville, following an 8-1 setback in the first game.

“The guys really responded well in that second game,” Louisburg coach Kade Larson said. “They knew they didn’t play their best baseball in game one. In game two, they got back to the basics at the plate and had a good approach that led to a lot of runs.”

Junior Maverick Rockers led the Wildcat bats as he had two home runs on the night – one in each game. Rockers was 2 for 5 with a home run and 3 RBIs in the nightcap and was one four players to drive in three runs.

Juniors Brandon Doles, George Reichart and senior A.J. Drew each had 3 RBIs and Reichart also added a pair of doubles.

Doles had a four-hit performance with a double and three runs scored. Senior Matt Madison also had three hits for the Wildcats, along with Reichart and Drew.

“Maverick was seeing the ball well all night,” Larson said. “Two home runs in a night is huge. He struggled a little bit at the start of the year, but has really swung it well since then. He’s really seeing the ball well and hitting to all fields.

“George, AJ, and Brandon all hit very well. They were all over the base paths and kept pressure on Wellsville all night.”



Freshman Declan Battle puts the ball in play Thursday at Wellsville.

Louisburg (10-8) opened the second game with 10 unanswered runs and had a 10-1 lead after four innings. The Wildcats scored four more in the six to earn the run-rule win.

In the first game, Wellsville used a five-run third inning to propel them to a 7-0 lead after four innings. A solo home run from Maverick Rockers prevented the shutout.

Louisburg will have two more games before the end of the regular season as the Wildcats host Paola on Senior Night on Tuesday. The regional tournament will begin next week.

Good start propels Louisburg over Eudora

EUDORA – It was just one game, but Louisburg made the most of it against Frontier League rival, Eudora.

The Wildcats scored seven unanswered runs and held on for a 7-5 win at Eudora last Tuesday.

Brandon Doles was dominant on the mound at time for Louisburg as he pitched a complete game and allowed just one earned run on three hits.

The other four runs in the game were unearned thanks in part to two Wildcat errors.

Senior Matt Madison had three hits for the Wildcats and drove home four runs. Doles also helped out his own cause with two hits and 2 RBIs.

Junior Kolby Kattau drove home the other Wildcat run, while A.J. Drew and George Reichart had two hits for Louisburg.

“Against Eudora Brandon was electric on the mound,” Larson said. “He had a couple innings that only took five pitches. Whenever you can do that and have a great defense behind you, I like our chances.

“Matt swung it really well at the plate. He came up with some key hits to drive in runs at the perfect time.”

Wildcats pick up sweep over Anderson County



Louisburg junior Maverick Rockers races around third to score the game-winning run Thursday in the first game of a doubleheader with Anderson County at Lewis-Young Park.

Fresh off two losses against Ottawa earlier in the week, the Louisburg baseball team had a chance to make up for those setbacks Thursday when it hosted Anderson County.

The Wildcats made up for it in a big way.

Louisburg got the sweep over Anderson County in a pair of vastly different games. The Wildcats defeated the Bulldogs 1-0 in the opener, then in the second game, the offense came to life in a 13-2 victory.

“That sweep was really big for us,” Louisburg coach Kade Larson said. “They’re a solid team, especially with their game 1 starting pitcher on the mound. It was nice to see the guys come out and play up to their potential.”

Louisburg (8-7) got some late game heroics to help lift them to that one-run win.

Junior Kolby Kattau pitched a complete game shutout as he allowed no runs on two hits over seven innings and struck out five.

At the plate, senior Matt Madison came up big for the Wildcats as he delivered a game-winning double in the bottom of the sixth that scored Maverick Rockers and it would be the only run the Wildcats needed.

Madison had three of the team’s five hits, including a pair of doubles, while Cade Driskell and Rockers each singled.

“That game 1 win was huge,” Larson said. “We battled in the field and at the plate the whole game. He was a good pitcher and we stuck with our approach and finally pushed one across. Matt swung it really well and all night. Once he hit that double to score Maverick I knew we had them.

“Kolby was lights out on the mound. Getting that one run was all he needed to finish it in the top of the seventh. All around we played great and it showed on the scoreboard.”



Louisburg junior Kolby Kattau pitched a complete game shutout Thursday to lead the Wildcats to a 1-0 win in the opener.

In the nightcap, the Wildcats jumped on Anderson County from the start as they scored three runs in the first, one in the second, two in the third and then broke the game open with a 7-run fourth.

Kattau led the Wildcat bats with a 3-hit performance, including a double and 2 RBIs. Rockers, Madison and Trevin Lohse each had two hits, while Rockers, Lohse and George Reichart all had a double.

Rockers, Reichart and Driskell each finished the game with 2 RBIs. Brandon Doles and Mack Newell each had a hit and a run

driven in.

On the mound, Rockers got the start and went four innings to pick up the win as he gave up two runs and struck out three. Lohse came on in relief and pitched a scoreless fifth inning.

“In game two we settled down at the plate and did we we always do,” Larson said. “The guys were patient and got a good pitch to hit the whole game.”

Louisburg will try to keep its winning ways going tonight when it travels to Eudora for one game. First pitch is set for approximately 6:30 p.m.

Wildcats swept by Ottawa in doubleheader

Last Tuesday, Louisburg found itself in a pair of back and fourth contests with Ottawa, and unfortunately for the Wildcats, came out on the losing end in both.

Ottawa held on for a 9-8 victory in the first game, before winning the nightcap, 11-7.

“Against Ottawa I was really impressed with how the guys battled,” Larson said. “We had some costly errors that ended up being the difference in the game. The guys never gave up though and that was huge. Ottawa is always good and to compete with them like we did was great. I’m excited to see where we go as we clean up some of those mistakes.”

Mistakes did haunt the Wildcats as they committed 10 errors in the two games.

In the opener, the Wildcats found themselves down 6-0 in the third inning before scoring four runs of their own in the bottom of the inning.

Louisburg was down 9-6 going into the final inning, and scored a pair of runs in the seventh, but could get no closer.

Driskell had a big day at the plate with four hits and 3 RBIs, while Doles added two hits and 2 RBIs, including a double.

In the second game, Ottawa jumped out to a 9-2 lead in the third inning and after six errors contributed to several of those runs.

Kattau, Madison and Reichart each finished with a pair of hits, while Driskell drove home two runs.

Wildcat bats come alive in sweep of Osawatomie



Louisburg senior Matt Madison makes contact with a pitch Thursday during the Wildcats' doubleheader against Osawatomie at Lewis-Young Park.

It all came together for the Louisburg baseball team Thursday when it hosted Osawatomie.

The pitching, the hitting, the defense – the Wildcats seemed to play well in every phase of the game as they came away with 15-0 and 11-1 victories over the Trojans at Lewis-Young Park.

"Our pitching was stellar," Louisburg coach Kade Larson said. "We threw a ton of strikes and I was very pleased with how they did. The guys played very well all around. We put

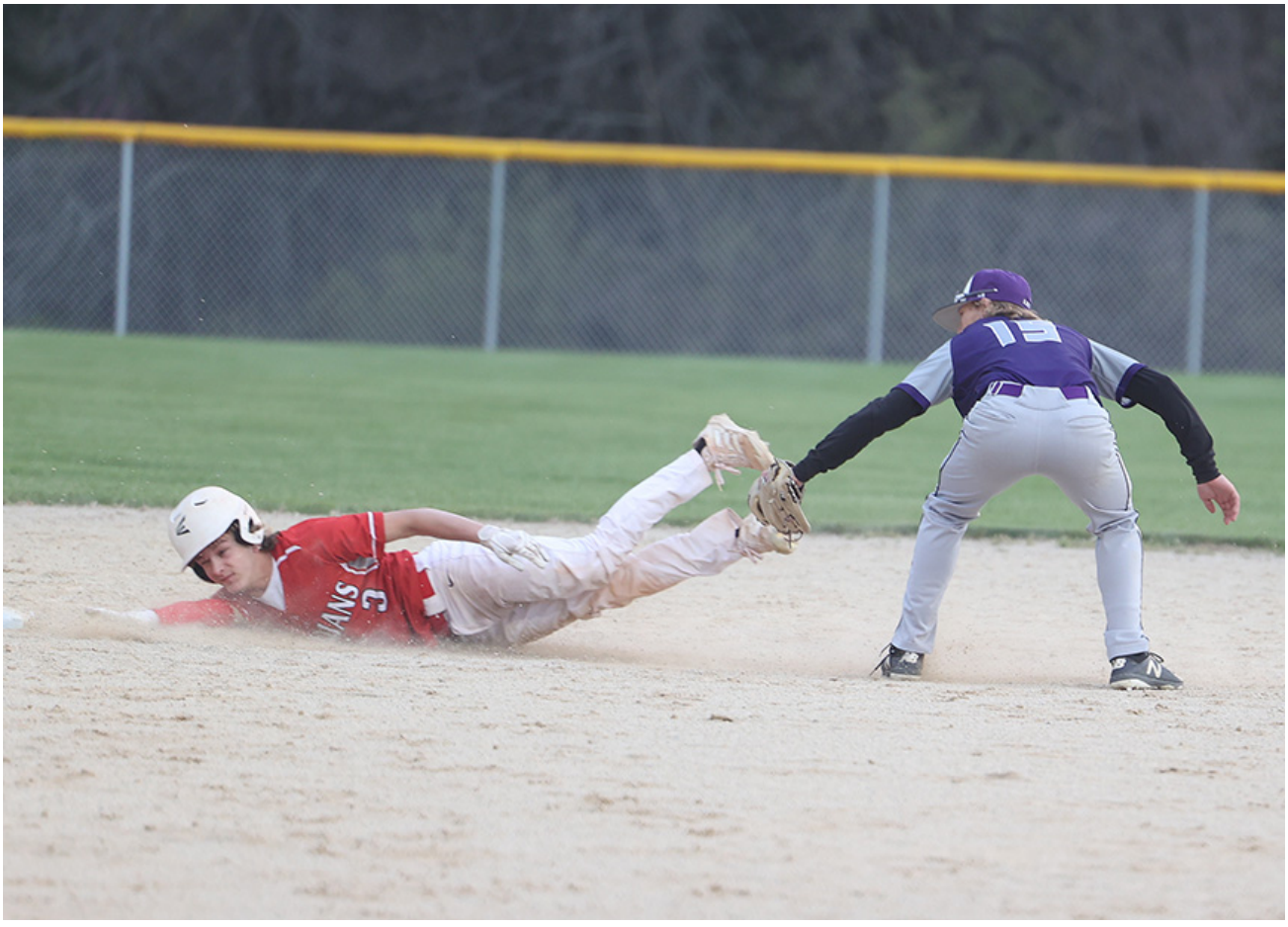
pressure on them from the beginning and didn’t look back.”

Louisburg did just that as the Wildcats’ bats exploded for 15 runs in the opener and won the game in four innings The Wildcats were led on the mound by Brandon Doles. The Louisburg junior pitched the complete game shutout and gave up just three hits and struck out three.

The bats followed suit as junior Kolby Kattau and freshman Declan Battle each had three hits and 2 RBIs. Kattau scored four times and Battle three, while Battle also had a triple.

Junior Maverick Rockers, junior George Reichart and sophomore Mack Newell each had a pair of hits and 2 RBIs, while Reichart also had a double.

The Wildcats (6-5) were also a threat on the base paths as they stole nine bases, including three from Kattau and two from Battle.



Shortstop Maverick Rockers tags out an Osawatomie runner

sliding into second base Thursday.

In the nightcap, Louisburg led 1-0 in the bottom of the fourth, and with two outs, scored eight runs to blow the game open. The Wildcats ended the contest with two more in the fifth.

“The guys had a great approach at the plate and stuck to it the whole night,” Larson said. “When we got two outs in one of the innings we ended up plated eight runs with those two outs. The guys battled and found a way via walk or hit, and that was great to see.”

Trevin Lohse started the nightcap and kept the Trojan hitters off-balance in his four innings of work. The Louisburg senior allowed no hits in those four innings and struck out seven.

Doles led the Wildcat offense as he was 3-for-4 with four RBIs, including a double. Kattau also added two hits, one of which was a triple, and two RBIs.

Lohse, Rockers and sophomore Cade Driskell each had two hits as well, while Rockers also scored three times. Seniors Matt Madison and A.J. Drew each added a double to their line, while Rockers had a triple.

Louisburg will try and build off the sweep tonight when it hosts Ottawa for a Frontier League doubleheader. It is a make-up contest from the postponement last week.

Madison signs on to play

baseball at Labette Community College



Louisburg senior Matt Madison recently made it official as he signed his letter of intent to play baseball at Labette Community College.

Matt Madison has always loved the game of baseball and has played it ever since he can remember.

It started as a hobby and eventually grew into something way bigger for him.

“I started playing baseball when I was 7 and I played in the local recreation league in Louisburg,” Madison said. “I played baseball as something to do for fun with friends. Then it grew in to a love and obsession for the game, to where I strived to do better at some aspect of it everyday.”

As a senior at Louisburg High School, Madison wasn’t ready to give up his love just yet.

In front of family at friends at the school, Madison signed his letter of intent to play baseball at Labette Community College and he is looking forward to what his future has in store for him.

“I am more than excited to be able to take my baseball talent and play to the next level,” Madison said. “It means a lot to me to be able to play at a higher level and to know that I can compete at that level as well.”

Playing collegiate baseball has always been a goal of Madison, but it all became a little trickier last year when COVID-19 hit and cancelled his junior season.



Senior Matt Madison signed his letter of intent to play baseball at Labette Community College. Seated next to Matt are his father Bill and mother Becki, along with his sister, Maggie.

It meant a potential year of playing and showcasing his talents went down the drain and Madison had some make up work to do. Luckily, he was able to find the right spot for him.

“Recruiting for me went well with the circumstances that COVID gave me,” Madison said. “I had already been talking to schools before the COVID shut down. Summer baseball really put me ahead of the game recruiting wise. Being able to play this summer and get seen given the troubles with COVID, helped tremendously.”

With several options on the table before receiving an offer from Labette, Madison had a tough decision ahead of him, but in the end Labette gave him the best offer.

Madison, who is the Wildcat starting catcher this season, will do the same for Labette the next two years and is looking forward to getting to know his new team.

“What really stood out to me with Labette was the offer they gave me,” Madison said. “At the time of me touring the campus, I had already had 3 other offers from other schools. The offer Labette gave was way better than any of the other offers I had received from other schools. What really stood out to me was the league they are apart of. It’s a league where I could grow and have many options to go to from there. They recruited me as a catcher and DH.

“My expectations when I get on campus is to really get at it. I want to try to win that starting spot right when I step on campus. I want to see what I can do to help the school win a championship.”

Wildcats snap losing streak with sweep of Bonner Springs



Louisburg junior Brandon Doles brings home a pitch Tuesday during the Wildcats’ home opener against Bonner Springs.

In the midst of four-game losing streak, the Louisburg baseball team needed something positive to go its way.

The Wildcats hosted Bonner Springs on Tuesday for their home opener at Lewis-Young Park and they christened their home field with a pair of victories.

Louisburg defeated Bonner Springs, 5-4, in the first game as it won in walk-off fashion and then followed it up with a 9-6 win in the nightcap to complete the sweep.

“That was a much needed sweep,” Louisburg coach Kade Larson said. “After playing good Piper and Spring Hill teams, it was nice to get back in the win column. We didn’t play our best game and definitely have some areas to clean up, but whenever you can come out with two wins in a night you’re happy with that.”

The Wildcats were staring at five losses in a row in the first game as they were down 4-3 going into their final at-bat.

Senior Matt Madison led off with a walk, while Brandon Doles and Trevin Lohse each followed with singles to load the bases. George Reichart then walked in pinch-runner Sam Hastings to tie the game.

Sophomore Mack Newell provided the heroics in the next at-bat as he hit a sacrifice fly that scored Doles and the Wildcats were able to pull out the win.

Louisburg rallied despite struggling in the field with seven errors. The Wildcats held a 3-0 lead, but Bonner Springs tied it in the fifth thanks to a pair of Louisburg errors.

The Braves then tied it in the seventh on another Wildcat mistake, before the Wildcats put together their comeback.



Second baseman George Reichart tries to turn a double play Tuesday against Bonner Springs.

“One thing I loved is that we never gave up,” Larson said. “We had a rough day with costly errors, but we kept battling and found a way to give ourselves a chance to win the game. We needed base runners and we found a way to get them.

“Mack found a way to hit a deep enough fly ball to bring in the winning run. I was really proud of his approach and doing what he needed to do to help the team.”

Doles started the game for the Wildcats and pitched five innings where he gave up three earned runs and struck out five. Junior Kolby Kattau came in for relief to get the win and allowed just one unearned run in two innings.

Lohse led the Wildcat offense with three hits on the day, while Reichart, Newell and senior A.J. Drew each had a run

batted in.

Louisburg (4-4) had no problems getting its bats going in the second game as it took a 7-1 lead after four innings – thanks to a 5-run fourth.

Lohse started the game and had the Bonner offense off-balance for four of his five innings and struck out five. Sam Hastings came in for the final two innings of relief and allowed just one run on two hits.

Hastings also provided a two-run single in the bottom of the sixth to all but seal the win for the Wildcats.



Sophomore Cade Driskell scoops up a ball at first base Tuesday against Bonner Springs.

“In the second game we were patient at the plate and did a great job of situational hitting,” Larson said. “Two guys that

really stood out were Trevin and Sam on the mound. Trevin has a no-hitter through 4 and controlled the game really well. Then Sam came in and closed it out and added two RBI’s for insurance in the bottom of the 6th that turned out to be a big help.”

Sophomore third baseman Cade Driskell had a big day at the plate as he went 3-for-3 with a double. Junior Maverick Rockers and Doles each finished with a pair of hits and a run batted in, with Doles adding a double.

Louisburg will try and make it three in a row today when it hosts Tonganoxie for one game.

Wildcat lose two to Spring Hill

On April 6, the Wildcats traveled to Spring Hill for a Frontier League doubleheader and the Wildcats had a tough time with a pair of 12-1 and 10-4 losses.

The Broncos used a seven-run fourth inning in the opener that broke open a 5-1 game at the time.

In the nightcap, Louisburg actually had a 4-3 lead in the fifth, but the Broncos scored four runs in the fifth and three more in the sixth to pull away.

Freshman Declan Battle led the Wildcat offense in the the nightcap with three hits, including a triple. Sophomore Cade Driskell had two hits, one of which was a double.

Battle, Driskell and A.J. Drew each had an RBI.

Maverick Rockers provided the Wildcats with a good start as he gave up three runs in three innings and struck out three.

Week 2 Athlete of the Week: Kolby Kattau



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

Kolby Kattau, Junior, Baseball

Louisburg junior Kolby Kattau had quite the opener for the Wildcat baseball team as he hit a bases-clearing triple to help give the Wildcats a 7-4 win over Baldwin. Along with the game-winning hit, he pitched the final four innings of the contest and struck out six batters.

On the week, Kattau had a .429 batting average and recorded two doubles, a triple and 7 RBIs. He also stole four bases and scored five runs as Kattau helped the Wildcats to a sweep of Baldwin last week.

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

Previous winners:

Week 1: Lexi Hampton



Kattau sparks Wildcats to season opening sweep of Baldwin



Junior Kolby Kattau records one of his four hits last Tuesday against Baldwin. Kattau had a bases-clearing clearing triple in the seventh that broke open a tie game to help the Wildcats to a sweep.

BALDWIN CITY – The Louisburg baseball team recorded a few firsts during its season opener last Tuesday against Baldwin.

The Wildcats got their first win of the season, their first doubleheader sweep – and in the process – head coach Kade Larson got his first career head coaching victory.

That first win came in dramatic fashion as the Wildcats

rallied for four runs in the seventh to defeat Baldwin, 7-4. The nightcap was a little more strange as Louisburg scored 12 runs on just one hit as the Wildcats cruised to a 12-1 victory to complete the sweep.

“It was a great team win,” Larson said. “Everyone contributed. We were able to get a lot going offensively and had some timely hitting paired with some great situational bunting. The guys played great and I’m glad we were able to complete the sweep.”

Louisburg found itself down 4-3 in the top of the seventh inning, but the Wildcats got the rally started with one out thanks to the lower part of its lineup.

The. No. 6 and 7 hitters, George Reichart and Cade Driskell opened with singles and Reichart scored on an RBI single from Mack Newell.

Freshman Declan Battle, the No. 9 hitter, worked a walk to load the bases. After a Louisburg strikeout, junior Kolby Kattau came to the plate and broke the game open with a bases-clearing triple.



Freshman Declan Battle slides safely into third base last Tuesday in Baldwin.

“The lower part of our lineup really stepped up,” Larson said. “After getting those first game jitters out in the first part of the game, everyone settled down and did what they knew how to do. I was really proud of how they did.”

Kattau then was able to close out the game on the mound. He pitched the final four innings and gave up just one earned run, while striking out six.

Senior Trevin Lohse started the first three innings and gave up two runs, both which were unearned and struck out four.

“Kolby really helped us,” Larson said. “He did a great job on the mound. The defense was playing him heavy on the pull side and he got a pitch away and went with it perfectly. After he hit that triple to take the lead I told him this game is yours

on the mound so go win it and he did.”

For the game, Kattau and senior Matt Madison led the Wildcat offense with three hits each, while Newell had 2 RBIs in his first varsity game. Madison and Battle also had a run batted in.



Louisburg senior Trevin Lohse rears back to fire a pitch to home plate against Baldwin.

In the nightcap, the Wildcats got a strong pitching performance from Brandon Doles as the Wildcat junior nearly went four innings as he gave up just the one run and struck out six.

Junior Maverick Rockers came in to pitch the final inning-plus to secure the win for Louisburg.

As for the 12 runs on one hit performance, a lot of things

worked in the Wildcats' favor for that to happen. Baldwin committed five errors on the night, walked seven and the Wildcats were hit by a pitch three times.

Kattau provided the Wildcats' lone hit, which was a double, and also had 3 RBIs in the contest.

"We did a great job of seeing pitches and getting runners on was a huge key in keeping the pressure on," Larson said. "Our guys were very opportunistic and put the ball in play and Baldwin had a few errors that we struck big on. We also had three stolen bases to get guys into scoring position which helped a lot, as well. It is not a stat I ever thought I would see in a baseball game, but a win is a win and we don't care how it happens."

Piper sweeps Louisburg in makeup contest

It was supposed to be its season opener, but thanks to inclement weather, Louisburg had to reschedule its game with Piper.

That road trip didn't turn out to be an enjoyable one Friday as the Wildcats fell in both games of the doubleheader, 7-5 and 9-7.

"I loved that we never gave up," Larson said. "We had guys on the bases all night long. We just couldn't get them in to score. We were in both games until the end and I was proud of how my guys kept battling until the last out. A few errors early in each game ended up being the difference at the end. We'll clean those up and be ready to go for the next game."

Three Louisburg errors haunted the Wildcats despite getting out to a good start in the opener. Louisburg scored five runs in the first two innings, but were shutout the rest of the way.

Piper scored two in the first, two in the second, two in the

fourth and another in the sixth to get the win.

The Wildcats were swinging the bat well early on as junior Brandon Doles hit a 2-run home run to put the Wildcats up.

Freshman Declan Battle followed suit for first varsity home run – a 2-run shot – that helped extend the Louisburg lead.

Battle, along with Trevin Lohse, George Reichart and Matt Madison, each had two hits for Louisburg.

In the nightcap, the Wildcats were forced to play catch-up from the start as Piper scored four times in the first two innings and they had to overcome three errors.

Kolby Kattau, Doles, Lohse and Newell each had three hits for Louisburg, while Doles finished with 2 RBIs.

The Wildcats were down 9-1 in the seventh inning, rallied to score four runs, but it wasn't enough as the Pirates were able to hold on.

Wildcats hope to make up for lost time after no season a year ago



Louisburg junior Maverick Rockers will be one of a few

returning players for the Wildcats this season after having no spring season a year ago.

A year ago, Kade Larson was preparing for his first season as the Louisburg head baseball coach.

It was an exciting time for the LHS alum and the rest of the Wildcats – but it didn't turn out how anyone thought it would.

The spread of COVID-19 halted the 2020 campaign and his first season as head coach would have to be put on hold. Along with that, seniors lost a chance to play their final year and the rest of the team lost a year of competition.

Louisburg will have just three seniors on the roster this season and the Wildcats will feature a group that is young and inexperienced in some spots.

Still, Larson likes what he has returning and the potential this team has.

"I'm very excited for the guys to get out there and represent their school," Larson said. "Missing a year of school ball is really tough and I can't wait to see how we play. The biggest problem with missing last year is a whole season of experience. We were going to be a younger team last year and this year we will be even younger. That experience will be missed, but I think our guys can really step up this year. "

The Wildcats return five starters off the 2020 team, including a few that saw time during the 2019 season as well.

Seniors Trevin Lohse, Matt Madison and AJ Drew, along with juniors Brandon Doles, Kolby Kattau and Maverick Rockers, will each play big roles for the Wildcats this season.



Junior Brandon Doles will help lead the Wildcat pitching rotation this season after seeing time on the mound as a freshman.

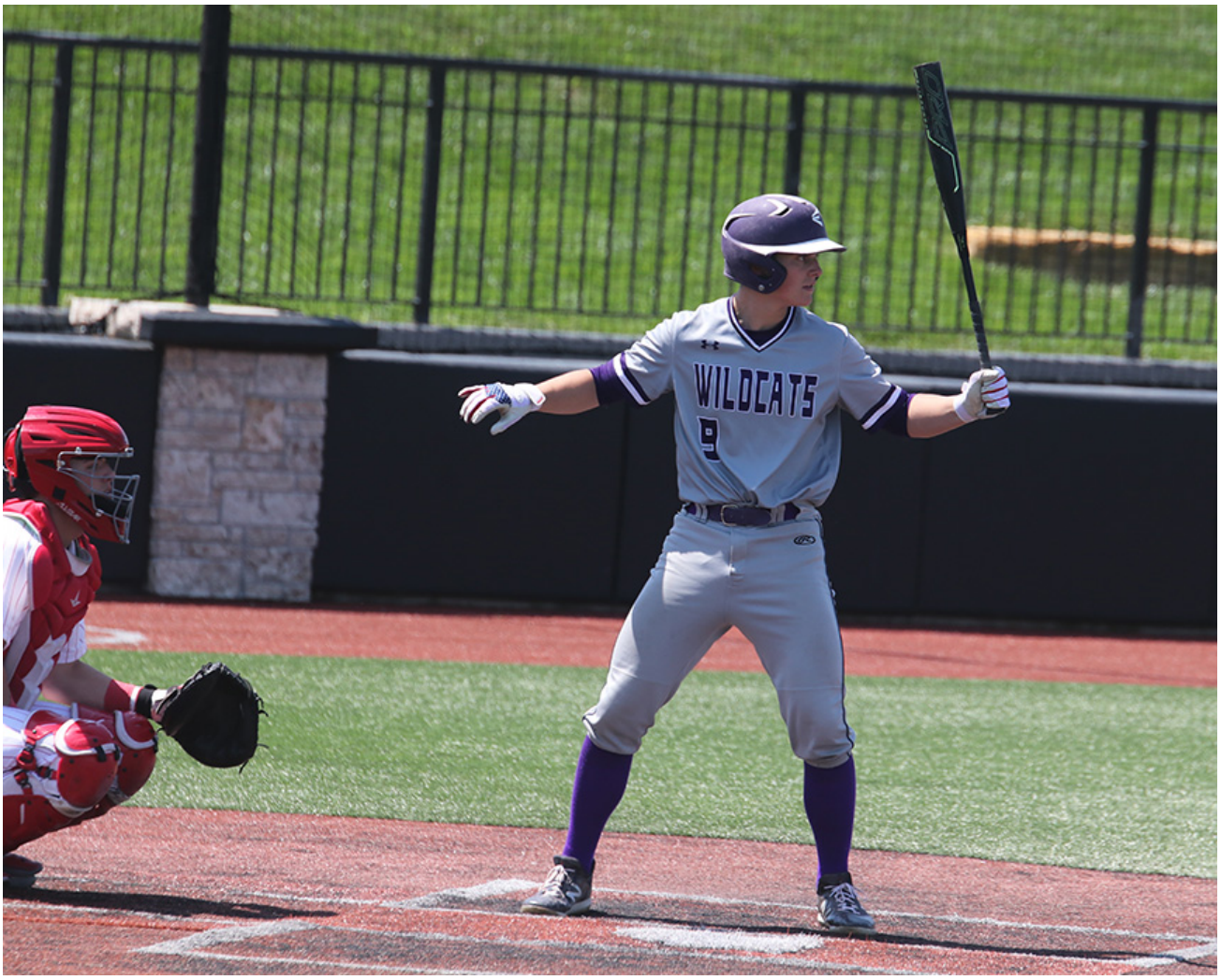
Lohse, Rockers, Doles and Kattau will lead the Louisburg pitching staff, with Madison serving as the team's catcher.

"Pitching-wise it will be nice to have a little experience back on the mound," Larson said. "Trevin, Maverick, Doles, and Kolby will need to step up and be leaders on the mound for us this year. I like what these four have been doing on the mound, and if we can get a couple others around them to step up, I think we can be a solid team this year."

Madison will be one of the team's top returning hitters, along with Doles, Rockers and Kattau. Junior George Reichart will also fixture into the mix on the infield, while sophomore Mack Newell will open the season at third base and freshman Declan

Battle will be in the outfield.

“It was pretty tough on all of us not getting that year to play with each other and missing out on a year to make memories,” Madison said. “With some guys not being there last year, and growing up with them playing, I could see how it hurt them as well.



Senior Matt Madison will be one of the team’s top returning hitters this season and will be the team’s starting catcher.

“I am very excited for the season to get started this week. It’s a big year for me and the team as well. This being my last year I really want to see what I can do to help the team win. Not only that, but help them out in a way that will help them in the future.”

Larson agrees that his lineup has potential and he is looking forward to seeing what this group can do when it opens its

season today at Piper.

“On the offensive side, Matt, Doles, and Kattau will be our leaders,” Larson said. “I’ve seen a lot of improvement from Trevin, George Reichart, and Maverick. If those guys can step up I am very excited about our run producing capability.

“I think we have potential to surprise some teams. If we can make the routine plays, we will be in every game at the end with a chance to win.”

Top Louisburg Sports Stories of 2020

There hasn’t been a year like 2020, and for most people, they are ready to put it behind them and forget it ever existed.

Still, with all the challenges that 2020 brought, there were still plenty of positives to talk about when it came to Louisburg High School sports. History-making state places and state medals were plentiful on this list, but it wasn’t all positive. Louisburg had to say goodbye to a beloved town figure and athletes had to deal with the loss of spring sports.

Below are the top stories from 2020, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the explanation is the link

to the actual story from the event.

When putting the list together, I took a lot of things into account – whether it was team vs. individual, popularity of the sport, historical achievements and the interest it drew on the web site. Thanks to the cancellation of spring sports, I don’t have the top 10 like I normally do, but I got close.

This year was a blast to cover, when I had the opportunity, anyway. Still, I am looking forward to what 2021 will bring. Thank you for everyone’s support and can’t wait for it all to begin again.



8. Ratliff-Becher wins state powerlifting title

After winning a state championship in 2019 Reilly Ratliff-Becher had every intention of backing up her performance during the Class 4A State Powerlifting Championships on March 7 at Piper High School.

In fact, the Louisburg senior wanted to improve it. Last

season, Ratliff-Becher took first in everything but squat, which she got runner-up.

This time around, she got the clean sweep.

Ratliff-Becher took first in bench, squat and clean and that led to her second straight state championship in the 180-pound class.

“It means a lot to me that I was able to win the state title again,” Ratliff-Becher said. “I set a goal for myself to win first in everything since I had got second in squat last year and I achieved it. Even though it wasn’t my best showing with the numbers I got on my lifts.

“The competition was very good this year, as it always is. But, fortunately with all the work I put in to at least maintain my numbers from last year, meant I was able to lift bigger amounts than my competition.”



7. Conley named state and midwest coach of the year

After a third place finish to end the year, Louisburg boys

soccer coach Kyle Conley was recognized among the state's best.

Conley was named as the Class 4-1A Coach of the Year by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association in November.

He guided the Wildcats to a 16-2 record on the season and the team's highest finish in program history when Louisburg ousted Rose Hill, 3-0, in the state third-place game.

Just a few weeks later, Conley was honored once again – this time on the girls' side.

Despite the lost season, the United Soccer Coaches wanted to recognize coaches for their past accomplishments and for what this past spring was supposed to hold.

Atop that list was Conley as he was named as the Small School Midwest Coach of the Year.

"I am absolutely honored to receive this award," Conley said. "There are so many great coaches in the Midwest, but to me this is a program award. None of this is possible without everyone involved; girls coming to work their tails off everyday, parents traveling and supporting us anywhere and everywhere, community helping with supporting the program, the school supporting the girls, etc. Without the support and buy in from the girls, parents and community none of this is possible."

The Wildcat girls program has had a successful start in its four years. Conley has a 54-22-2 record during that span, that included two state runner-ups and another state final four appearance.



6. Louisburg cheer places third at state

The Louisburg cheer squad had to do its postseason competition a little different this year thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It didn’t seem to bother them much as the defending state champions found themselves right in the thick of things again.

Although they didn’t repeat as champs, they were still among the state’s best as the Wildcats cheerleaders finished third in the state back in November.

Unlike performing in front of judges like they did in 2019, the Wildcats had to video tape their performance and send it in to be judged. It fared well as they tallied 83.35 points to finish in the top 3.

Baldwin earned the state title with 88.85 points and Abilene was second with 85.25.

Members of the Louisburg cheer squad are Bella Feikert, Addison Drake, Brooklyn Harmon, Jayden Trester, Maddy Carpenter-Ross, Sophie Katzer, Sammy McDaniel, Julia Arriola, Andrea Gaza, JoJo Hendrickson, Sydney Dudzik, Abby Bradley, Anna Poe, Sienna Finch, Mable Graham, Audrey Anderson, Zoe Weers, Anna Morrison and Maggie Madison



5. Holtzen, Owens earn state medals for Wildcat wrestling

Ryan Owens and Cade Holtzen both had their own agendas going into the state wrestling tournament.

Owens, qualified for state last year, but left without a win and he vowed to fix that this time around. As for Holtzen, he came up short in his efforts for a second state medal as a

sophomore last season and had all the motivation not to come home empty-handed again.

Both wrestlers more than made up for their rough patches a year ago.

Owens and Holtzen left Salina with a state medal during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships on Friday and Saturday at the Tony’s Pizza Events Center.



Owens made it to the semifinals and wound up earning a fourth-place medal at 120 pounds, while Holtzen finished fifth at 126 pounds.

It also marked the first time since 2016 that Louisburg finished the season with multiple state medalists, when Nathan Keegan and Mason Koechner each brought home medals.

The Wildcats nearly had three medalists as sophomore Brandon Doles finished one win shy of a state medal at 160 pounds with a 2-2 record.



4. Dennis steps down as LHS team doctor

Almost every day of the week, if you were looking for Damon Dennis, he could be found at his office on 11 S. Broadway St., helping treat those pesky aches and pains, taking X-rays, or mending those beaten up athletes after a game.

Doc D – as he his affectionately known – opened Louisburg Chiropractic Office 28 years ago and has served as the

Louisburg High School athletic team doctor for almost that same amount of time.

Dennis has seen it all. The walls in his office are lined with mementos from his years of service to both the community and the high school.

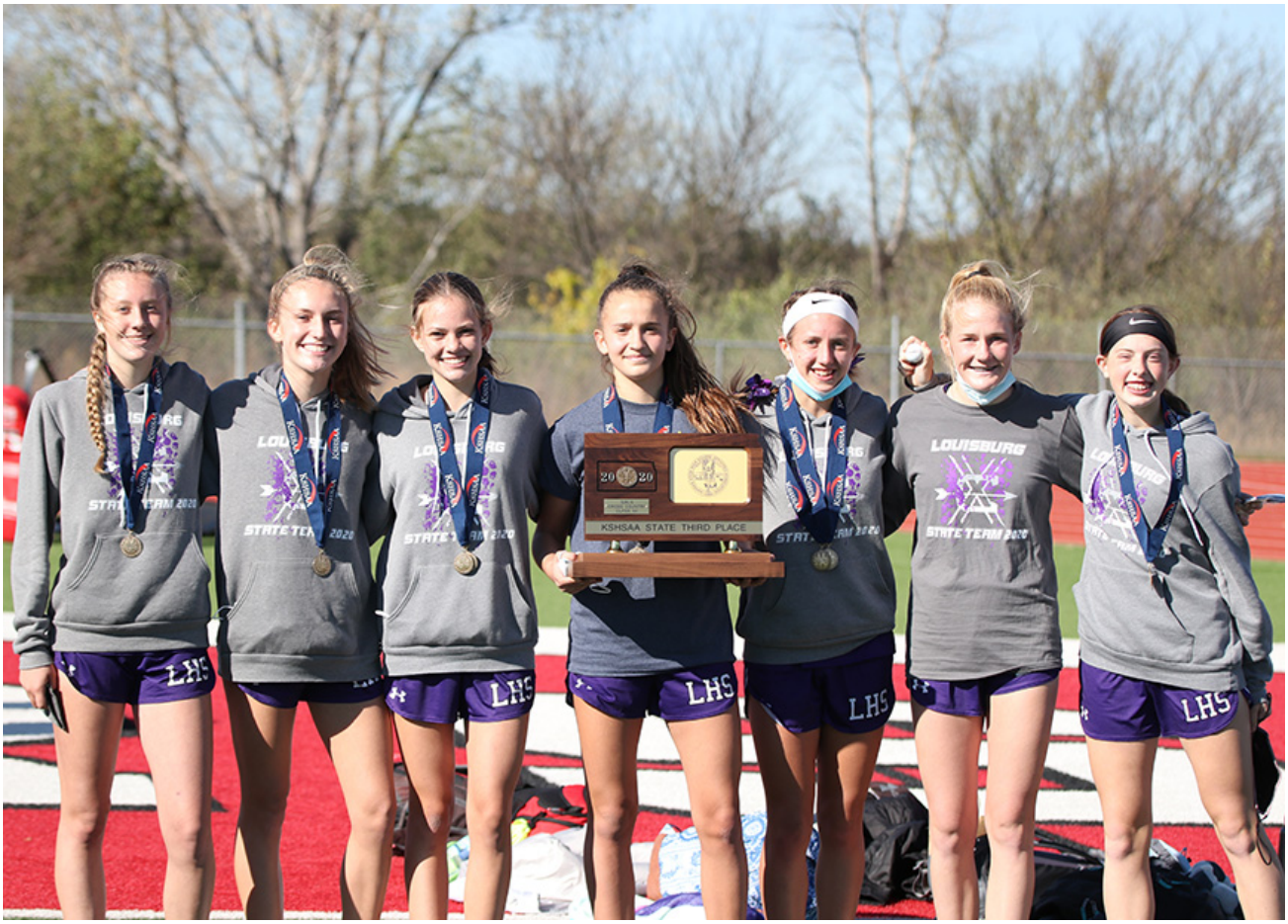
He has taped thousands of ankles, seen even more patients and has touched many lives during his time in Louisburg. That is why this week is one of the more emotional times in his life.

In May, he left Louisburg Chiropractic Office and handed the reins over to Dr. Jake Polzin. Add to that, Dennis also stepped away as LHS' team doctor and left an absence on the sidelines and behind the mic that many in Louisburg have come to know.

"My decision to step down and sell the practice has turned out to be the hardest thing I have ever done," Dennis said. "I have poured everything I have into my job and community. It has become my entire existence. I was taught from a young age to serve others and your community. I feel like the pressures I have put on myself have become unhealthy. I have put about 40 years work in to 28 and feel like there is never going to be a good time to make such a huge life change.

"That being said, I feel like I need to make changes while I am still able to do the things that will be best for my family. Dr. Polzin came along and I think he will carry on the work at the office wonderfully. We are a lot alike in many ways. I could not have found anyone better to replace me."

For many, Dennis has been a big part of people's lives, especially in the athletic arena. He has served as the LHS team doctor since 1992 and has treated many athletes in those 28 years.



3. Girls Cross Country Takes Third at State

For 23 years, the Louisburg cross country program has been chasing a top three finish at the Class 4A meet.

The Wildcats have had several teams qualify, especially in the last few seasons, but have always come up short of their goal. Following Saturday's race in Wamego, the Wildcats can finally stop running after it.

The Louisburg girls put together an historic performance at the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships at Wamego Country Club. The Lady Cats earned a state plaque with a third place finish as they surpassed Buhler by eight points to record the school's first top three state finish.

Junior Reese Johnson, sophomores Claire Brown, Bree Gassman and Nova Ptacek, along with freshmen Lola Edwards, Maddy Rhamy and Erin Apple, will all go down in school history as they became the first Wildcat team to bring home state hardware.

“It means the world to me to be a part of the first team ever to place at state,” Rhamy said. “Coming into the state meet, I was just hoping our team would be in the top half, so you could imagine my excitement when our team placed third. I didn’t even know we made school history until our coaches told us.”

Rhamy was one of two freshmen who earned top 10 finishes individually, along with Edwards. Rhamy finished eighth overall in 20 minutes and 58 seconds, while Edwards was right behind her in 10th in 21:02.

Junior Reese Johnson also garnered a state medal as she was 15th in 21:28 to help the Lady Cats to an historic performance.

It was a proud moment for many in the Louisburg program, and included in that is John Reece. The longtime Wildcat head coach was all smiles following his team’s performance.

“It is 23 years the making,” coach Reece said. “You always have the plans and goals to get to state and then you get a group to go to state and do something great. This year was one of those. With the Frontier League as tough as it is, and then getting third there, put it in our heads that maybe we could do this. They all went out and ran their races, and that just shows their grit and determination and who they are.”

A week earlier, the Wildcats also made history as its was the first time in school history when they qualified the entire boys team to the state meet as they took third at regionals.



2. Boys Soccer Finishes Runner-Up At State

As the Louisburg players huddled around their state plaque, many of them looked at it in awe and wonder.

“Hey guys, we won this,” a player shouted.

The statement was obvious at the time, but nonetheless, their excitement was more than warranted.

For the first time in program history, the Louisburg boys soccer team brought home a plaque from the state final four as the Wildcats defeated Rose Hill, 3-0, on Saturday in the third place match of the Class 4-1A state tournament at Stryker Sports Complex in Wichita.

It was only the second time in school history that the Wildcats had it made it this far, with the other being in 2016, when they finished fourth.

“There are only six teams in the entire state that get to end their year with a win and we wanted to be one of those teams,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We want to be able to hang up a banner on our field and we wanted a plaque so that no one can forget what these kids earned and what they did this season. I am so proud of all of them.”

It was a program defining moment for the Wildcats as they began the weekend searching for a state championship, but lost 2-0 to Bishop Miege on Friday in the semifinals. Still, recording the best finish in school history is nothing for someone to hang their head about, and the Wildcats came out Saturday wanting to make sure they brought some hardware home.

“It’s absolutely crazy to think about what we have accomplished this year, partly because I have only played soccer in high school,” senior captain Logan Faulkner said. “Bringing a state plaque back will just be a reminder of what we did and how we reached our goal.”



1. COVID-19 Cancels Spring Sports

In March, Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly closed all schools for the rest of the 2019-20 school year due to the spread of COVID-19.

When most students hear school has been closed, especially in the winter, cheers erupt. In this case, however, the tone was much more somber – especially among the senior class.

Proms were canceled. Any plans they had for a graduation ceremony were put on hold, and for more than 30 seniors, their last opportunity at playing a sport at Louisburg High School was taken away.

In fact, close to 200 students were planning on participating in an activity in the spring, but with no school, the Kansas State High School Activities Association followed suit and canceled the spring season the day after Gov. Kelly's declaration.

Students, parents and coaches alike have had to come to grips that a season they had been looking forward to all year, was never going to happen. Tears flowed, walls were punched in frustration and some were left speechless.

There would be no game days, no Senior Nights and no postseason runs. Athletes had to figure out how to cope with this fact and it was a challenge for the Louisburg girls soccer, track and field, baseball, softball, golf and swim teams.

Many of those teams had big postseason aspirations after success in 2019 and were left wondering what could have been.