Thank you, Louisburg!



Getting to cover so many great kids was an honor for me, including these guys as they were generous enough to let me in their group picture.

Eleven years ago, I was a nervous wreck.

I had just been laid off from my newspaper job, one where I had spent seven years covering Louisburg. Like so many others in this profession, I suddenly found myself staring at an uncertain future as newspapers continued to disappear. Jobs were scarce. Stability was gone. And I had a family to support.

I knew I was probably going to have to take a job I didn't want – something far from journalism – just to make ends meet.

Then an idea hit me.

With news media shifting more and more online, I wondered: *Would Louisburg support something like this?* Would the community care enough about local sports to follow an independent site dedicated solely to their athletes?

As it turned out, the answer was an overwhelming yes.

Because of the relationships I had built during my first seven years here, there was an appetite from local businesses to support the idea – and many of them never wavered. Eleven years later, a lot of those same businesses were still standing beside Louisburg Sports Zone, believing it was an important piece of the community.

They were right – and I couldn't agree more.

This past decade-plus has been some of the best years of my life. Through Louisburg Sports Zone, I formed incredible relationships with coaches, athletes, administrators, parents and community members. Even as a graduate of rival Paola, the Louisburg community adopted me as one of their own.

For those of you around my age or older, this might resonate.

I often felt like *Norm* from *Cheers*.

Every time I walked into a gym, stadium or field, I'd hear, "Hey Andy!" or "Thanks for coming!" or "We appreciate you." So many people knew my name – even people I didn't know – simply because they appreciated what I did.

Instead of an icy cold glass in my hand, I carried a camera. My barstool wasn't at a counter – it was on the sideline, capturing moments as they happened. And there were plenty of them.

State championships. State tournament appearances. Individual champions and medalists. Record-breaking performances.

I was lucky enough to see it all.

But my favorite part was always watching kids grow – seeing freshmen mature into seniors and leave as confident, capable young adults. That transformation never got old.

My very first event as Louisburg Sports Zone was a home basketball game. I was only a couple months removed from being laid off and still unsure if this idea would work or if anyone would even care.

Those worries disappeared quickly.

As I walked into the gym, Natalie Moore, Kirstin Lowry and Kallie O’Keefe stopped their warmups to smile and wave. Coach Shawn Lowry walked clear across the court to shake my hand and welcome me back.

More than a decade later, I still get those same smiles from athletes and handshakes from coaches and parents alike. Those connections are what made this decision so difficult.



Was fortunate to interview so many student athletes these last 11 years.

Six months ago, I was offered a position with KSHSAA Covered and the Kansas High School Activities Association. Honestly, I

never thought I’d have another writing job outside of Louisburg Sports Zone. I fully intended to keep doing this until the appetite for it simply wasn’t there anymore.

But the opportunity was too good to pass up – and it was the right move for my family.

I knew the connections wouldn’t be the same. Starting over is hard, especially when you know what you’re leaving behind. My favorite part of this job was feeling the appreciation from the community and knowing I was giving people something positive to read.

I wasn’t perfect. I made mistakes along the way. But this community allowed me to grow – as a writer, photographer and a person. I always tried to do the best I could and to cover every sport as fairly and equally as possible.

The last five or six years put me in an interesting position, as my own kids were playing varsity sports. How do you balance being a supportive dad and a journalist at the same time? I hope I did it right.

One of the biggest perks of this job was getting to write about my kids – their first varsity goal, first basket, first shutout or a big volleyball performance. I know how lucky I was to experience that.

None of this would have been possible without my family – especially my wife, Jennifer. I wasn’t home much in the evenings, especially with young kids, and that wasn’t easy. She never stopped supporting me.



It was awesome to have my family with me as I was surprised with Louisburg Citizen of the Year a few years ago.

To my kids – Jordan, Ally and Carter – thank you for understanding the crazy hours and for supporting me even when

I couldn’t be at everything like other parents. I love you more than you know.

I also want to thank all of my advertisers, past and present. Louisburg Sports Zone doesn’t exist without you. Craig Holtzen and Edward Jones, Dixon Contracting Services, White’s Automotive, Prime Accounting Services, Amborn Stone, Wildcat Vet Clinic, Dr. Andy Hill, Destination Fun Travel, Vance Brothers, Go Brolly, First National Bank, First Option Bank, Landmark Bank, Dr. Laura’s Orthodontics, IronHorse Family and Cosmetic Dentistry, Louisburg Family Dental, Vohs Pharmacy, Elliott Insurance, Magnum Equipment, Louisburg Athletic Club, Louisburg Library, Tri-County Pest, Midwest Collision – and so many others along the way.

I also wanted to give a big shoutout to a Louisburg graduate – Kenneth Sweeney. He has been my “web guy” this whole time. He helped design the site and has also been there to help me troubleshoot what problems have come up since then. I couldn’t have done it without him.

Thank you to every coach I’ve worked with. Getting to know you and promote your programs has truly been an honor. I appreciate you enduring my countless emails that I send out every week. You have helped make Louisburg Sports Zone what it is as well. I will miss you all.

And finally, the student-athletes – you are the reason this worked. Thank you for letting me into your lives and giving me so many incredible stories to tell. And consider this a long-overdue apology to anyone I ever did “dirty” with an unfortunate action photo.

So here I am, 11 years later, feeling some of those same nerves as I move into something new. The last six months with KSHSAA Covered have been great, and I’ve been welcomed with open arms.

Still, walking away from something I built was not easy.

I only hope that Louisburg Sports Zone has been as much of a blessing to you as it has been to me. These have been some of the best times of my life – and I will treasure them always.

Thank you, Louisburg.

Louisburg boys lose pair of home games to Leavenworth, Ottawa



Louisburg senior Derek Frederick drives to the basket last Friday against Leavenworth.

Louisburg boys basketball endured a tough week at home, dropping a pair of close, hard-fought contests to Leavenworth

and Ottawa.

The Wildcats were edged by Leavenworth, 51-48, last Friday despite building a double-digit second-half lead. Louisburg got off to a strong start and led 30-17 midway through the third quarter, but struggled to handle the Pioneers' pressure defense down the stretch. Leavenworth forced 23 Louisburg turnovers and converted them into 16 points while catching fire offensively in the second half.

Louisburg still held a 35-33 lead entering the fourth quarter, but Leavenworth outscored the Wildcats 18-13 in the final frame to complete the comeback.

Lance Callahan led Louisburg with 12 points, while Herschel Strumberger added 10 points and eight rebounds. Parker Stanfield also pulled down eight rebounds, and Owen Marsh finished with eight points and five steals. Louisburg hit four 3-pointers in the game but was limited by the Pioneers' defensive pressure after halftime.

Louisburg (2-2) followed that loss with a 67-53 setback to Ottawa last Tuesday, facing one of the top teams in the Frontier League. The Wildcats stayed competitive in the first half, trailing just 28-28 at the break, but Ottawa took control in the third quarter by outscoring Louisburg 27-7.



Louisburg's Fletcher Viterna goes up for a rebound last Friday against Leavenworth.

Despite the lopsided third quarter, Louisburg continued to battle behind a strong perimeter shooting effort, knocking down 10 3-pointers.

Callahan connected on five from beyond the arc and finished with a team-high 19 points, while Derek Frederick was perfect from deep at 4-for-4 and scored 15 points. John Guetterman chipped in eight points, and Strumberger led the Wildcats on the boards with 10 rebounds.

Louisburg outscored Ottawa 18-12 in the fourth quarter but could not overcome the decisive third-quarter run.

LOU		14	11	10	13 — 48
LV		2	12	19	18 — 51

LOUISBURG (2-2): Lance Callahan 5-15 0-0 12; Herschel Strumberger 5-6 0-0 10; Owen Marsh 3-11 2-3 8; John Guetterman 3-5 0-0 7; Derek Frederick 1-6 3-4 6; Parker Stanfield 1-1 1-4 3; Fletcher Viterna 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 19-47 6-11 48. 3-point field goals: 4, (Callahan 2, Frederick, Guetterman)

LOU		10	18	7	18 — 53
OTT		16	12	27	12 — 67

LOUISBURG: Lance Callahan 6-13 2-2 19; Derek Frederick 5-7 1-2 15; John Guetterman 2-5 4-5 8; Fletcher Viterna 2-4 0-1 5; Owen Marsh 1-10 1-2 3; Herschel Strumberger 0-3 2-4 2; Parker Stanfield 0-0 1-2 1. Totals: 16-43 11-18 53. 3-point field goals: 10, (Callahan 5, Frederick 4, Viterna)

Wildcat girls drop home contests to Leavenworth, Ottawa



Louisburg junior Ellia Gibbons drives to the basket last Friday at home against Leavenworth.

Louisburg watched a late lead slip away last Friday as Leavenworth used a decisive fourth-quarter run to pull out a 50-37 win in a non-league matchup at Louisburg.

The Wildcats carried a 30-25 advantage early in the fourth quarter, but the Pioneers caught fire from the perimeter, knocking down four 3-pointers in the final period after shooting just 1-of-17 from beyond the arc through the first three quarters. Leavenworth outscored Louisburg 25-7 over the final eight minutes to seal the win.

Turnovers also proved costly for Louisburg, which committed 23 miscues. Leavenworth capitalized with 20 points off those turnovers.

McKinley Harmon led Louisburg with nine points and three steals. Kinley Scott added seven points and five rebounds, while freshman Tatum Battle made a strong impression in her varsity debut, scoring seven points and collecting a team-high three steals. McKenna Lohse chipped in six points for the Wildcats.

“The Leavenworth game was a hard game to lose, they made some big shots down the stretch and we could not finish in the fourth quarter,” Louisburg head coach Adrianne Lane said. “The girls have been practicing hard and we are getting better. I’m excited for this week to see how we do against two more league teams.”



Louisburg freshman Tatum Battle goes up for a basket last Friday at home against Leavenworth.

Louisburg fell to 1-3 on the season with the loss.

Earlier in the week, Ottawa jumped out to an early lead and never looked back last Tuesday night, handing Louisburg a 66-37 home loss.

The Cyclones led 15-4 after the first quarter and continued to build their advantage behind a dominant performance from Leah Askins-Dieterich, who finished with 28 points, 10 steals and four assists.

Louisburg was led by Kinley Scott, who turned in a strong all-around effort with 16 points and 12 rebounds. Scott was efficient around the basket and played aggressively on both ends of the floor.

“Kinley had a great game against Ottawa scoring 16 points and 12 rebounds,” Lane said. “I thought she did a good job finishing in the lane, and she played super hard.”

Ella Bockelman added six points, while Ellia Gibbons scored five for the Wildcats. McKinley Harmon chipped in four points as Louisburg continued to gain experience against a tough schedule.

Despite the loss, Lane said the Wildcats are showing signs of improvement as they prepare for upcoming league contests.

LOU	11	11	8
7 – 37			
LV	5	13	7
25 – 50			

LOUISBURG (1-3): McKinley Harmon 3-8 1-2 9; Tatum Battle 2-6 2-2 7; Kinley Scott 1-5 5-8 7; McKenna Lohse 3-5 0-0 6; Ellia Gibbons 1-6 1-2 4; Ella Bockelman 1-7 0-0 3; Talen McMurray 0-0 1-2 1. Totals: 11-42 10-16 37. 3-point field goals: 5, (Harmon 2, Battle, Bockelman, Gibbons)

LOU	4	12	11	10 – 37
OTT	15	16	20	15 – 66

LOUISBURG: Kinley Scott 6-13 4-4 16; Ella Bockelman 3-5 0-0 6; Ellia Gibbons 2-5 0-0 5; McKinley Harmon 2-4 0-0 4; Morgan Latham 1-3 0-0 2; Maddie Yoder 0-5 2-6 2; Talen McMurray 1-3 0-0 2. Totals: 15-45 6-10 37. 3-point field goals: 1, (Gibbons)

Week 1 Athlete of the Week: Herschel Strumberger



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week

one of the winter sports season, sponsored by Dr. Laura’s Orthodontics.

HERSCHEL STRUMBERGER, SOPHOMORE, BASKETBALL

The Louisburg boys basketball team opened the season with a pair of wins and sophomore forward Herschel Strumberger was a big reason why. During the Wildcats’ season opener on Dec. 2 against Wellsville, Strumberger hit the game-winning shot with 10 seconds left. It capped a big day for him as he finished with 18 points and 18 rebounds in the 59-57 win.

Then last Friday on the road at Tonganoxie, Strumberger put together his second double-double of the season in a win over the Chieftains. He scored a team-high 21 points and pulled down 16 rebounds as the Wildcats were able to hold on for a 63-60 victory.

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



Wildcat boys begin with pair of wins, including league victory at Tonganoxie



Louisburg sophomore Herschel Strumberger has recorded back-to-back double-doubles to begin the season and has helped the Wildcats to a 2-0 record.

TONGANOXIE — Louisburg boys basketball put together its best half of the young season Friday night, storming back from a halftime deficit to edge Tonganoxie, 63–60, in a Frontier League road battle.

The Wildcats (2-0) trailed 27–24 at the break but erupted for 39 second-half points, leaning on a trio of double-double performances and some timely shooting to fend off a strong effort from the Chieftains.

Herschel Strumberger continued his dominant start to the season with a massive 21-point, 16-rebound night, controlling the paint on both ends. Lance Callahan gave Louisburg a huge outside spark, knocking down three 3-pointers as part of a 16-point performance, while Owen Marsh added 12 points and 10

rebounds.

Louisburg won the third quarter 22–17 to grab momentum, then held on late thanks to free throws and a clutch perimeter bucket.

“It is big,” Louisburg coach Ben Doll said. “League road wins are hard to come by because this league is so good. We haven’t played a great game yet, and we are working toward that. Lost the lead, kept coming back, and to hold on was huge. We made our free throws and hit a few big shots.”

Strumberger’s activity on the glass again proved critical.

“Herschel has a long way to go and that is great,” Doll said. “He is going to keep getting better. He worked a lot in the offseason and it is showing now. He is relentless at going for the ball, cleaning up the boards and giving us a real post presence to work around. He gives us extra possessions and we need that.”

They needed every one of them to survive a standout effort from Tonganoxie star Lachlan McRae. The all-Frontier League guard poured in 24 points and dished six assists, continually pressuring the Louisburg defense.

“Lachlan is hard to stop,” Doll said. “He can shoot and drive, he is a good passer and puts pressure on the defense. Glad to see our guys make the plays we needed down the stretch.”



Louisburg junior Lance Callahan scored 16 points in the Wildcats' road win over Tonganoxie on Friday.

Callahan delivered one of the biggest, drilling a late 3-pointer to break open a tie game with 1:20 left to help the Wildcats stay in front.

"Lance hit a late 3 there for us that was big," Doll said. "He also plays a lot in the offseason and it is paying off and showing. Good to see him have success and hit a lot of big shots."

LOU		10	14
22	17 – 63		
TON		12	15
17	16 – 60		

LOUISBURG (2-0): Herschel Strumberger 7-12 6-8 21; Lance

Callahan 6-8 1-2 16; Owen Marsh 5-16 2-4 12; Derek Frederick 1-5 4-4 6; John Guetterman 1-6 2-6 5; Parker Stanfield 1-5 1-2 3. Totals: 21-55 16-26 63. 3-point field goals: 5, (Callahan 3, Strumberger, Guetterman)

STRUMBERGER'S GAME-WINNER LIFTS LOUISBURG IN OPENER

Louisburg opened its season Dec. 2 with a nail-biter, surviving multiple Wellsville rallies before Herschel Strumberger delivered the game-winner in a 59–57 victory at home.

The Wildcats raced ahead by double digits early, only to watch the Eagles claw back before halftime. Louisburg again stretched the lead after the break, then saw Wellsville surge once more in the fourth.

With the game tied in the final seconds, Strumberger sealed it, scoring inside with 10 seconds left to put Louisburg ahead for good.

The senior forward was dominant throughout, finishing with 18 points and 18 rebounds as the Wildcats controlled the glass.

"There were a lot of teaching moments," Doll said of the opener. "It was nerve-racking at times and we had a ton of turnovers. Wellsville wanted to turn it into a track meet, and the key with that is to *not* get into it – and we did. It hurt us at times. Glad we survived, and that is a team I would not want to see on a regular basis."

Marsh added 13 points for the Wildcats, while Derek Frederick and Callahan each chipped in nine.

LOU		17	11	
16	15 – 59			
WEL		13	12	
16	16 – 57			

LOUISBURG: Herschel Strumberger 9-16 0-3 18; Owen Marsh 5-12 3-4 13; Derek Frederick 3-11 2-2 9; Lance Callahan 3-10 2-3 9; John Guetterman 1-5 3-4 5; Parker Stanfield 1-5 1-2 3; Fletcher Viterna 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 23-61 11-18 59. 3-point field goals: 2, (Frederick, Callahan)

Wildcat girls win season opener over Wellsville in dominant fashion



Louisburg junior Kinley Scott saves the ball from going out of bounds last Tuesday at home against Wellsville.

The Louisburg girls basketball team opened its season in

convincing fashion last Tuesday, using a dominant second quarter to pull away from Wellsville Eagles for a 51–29 win in the Wildcats’ home debut.

The Wildcats trailed 10–9 after the first quarter but erupted for a 15–3 run in the second, fueled by strong interior play from Kinley Scott and McKenna Lohse. Scott finished with 14 points and eight rebounds, while Lohse added 13 points and eight boards of her own as Louisburg controlled the paint throughout.

Head coach Adrianne Lane said her team’s togetherness set the tone early in the year.

“The girls played great against Wellsville, they played together and did a great job executing,” Lane said. “We ran the floor really well and played great defense. The girls deserved that first win — they played together and battled every possession.”

Louisburg shook off early jitters before taking command as Wellsville got a lot of second chance points to take a one-point lead going into the second quarter.



Louisburg junior Ella Bockelman pulls up for a jumper against Wellsville.

“We all were a little nervous to start, but once we got started I felt like the girls played with confidence and played together,” Lane said. “Kenna and Kinley both did a great job running the floor and finishing in transition.”

Ella Bockelman and Maddie Yoder each scored seven points, with Yoder knocking down the Wildcats’ lone three-pointer. Morgan Latham added six.

Louisburg outscored Wellsville 27–16 in the second half to secure the season-opening victory.

LOU	9	15	12	15 – 51
WEL	10	3	10	6 – 29

LOUISBURG: Kinley Scott 5-10 4-9 14; McKenna Lohse 6-11 1-1

13; Ella Bockelman 3-4 1-2 7; Maddie Yoder 3-5 0-0 7; Morgan Latham 2-8 2-2 6; McKinley Harmon 1-7 0-0 2; Emersynn Deere 0-2 2-2 2. Totals: 20-50 10-16 51. 3-point field goals: 1, Yoder

Wildcats stumble in league opener at Tonganoxie

Three days after its strong start, Louisburg hit early offensive struggles on the road in its Frontier League opener, falling 47–14 to Tonganoxie on Friday.

Tonganoxie's defensive pressure — led by standout duo Addy Schooler and Alyssa Schoeneck — forced the Wildcats into difficult shots all night. Schooler posted 14 points and six rebounds, while Schoeneck filled the stat sheet with 13 points, six rebounds and eight steals.

Louisburg managed just six first-half points and was held to two baskets in the second half. Ellia Gibbons led the Wildcats with four points, while McKinley Harmon hit the team's lone three-pointer.

Lane said Tonganoxie's speed and physicality dictated the game.

"Tonganoxie is a tough team, they play super fast and they are super physical," Lane said. "They have several players who played great minutes, I feel like Tongie will be a very tough team to beat in our league this year."

Louisburg struggled to match the pace but remains focused on growth.

"We had a hard time with the pace of the game — they played super fast and super aggressive," Lane said. "All we can do is learn and get better after the tough loss, and I know this group of girls is up for the challenge."

The Wildcats return to action this Tuesday when they host Ottawa in another Frontier League matchup.

LOU 6 3 2 3 – 14

TON 15 12 19 1 – 47

LOUISBURG (1-1): Ellia Gibbons 2-7 0-0 4; McKinley Harmon 1-3 0-0 3; Kinley Scott 1-7 1-2 3; McKenna Lohse 1-6 0-0 2; Talen McMurray 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 6-39 1-4 14. 3-point field goals: 1, Harmon

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Louisburg boys hopeful as new roles take shape for upcoming season



Louisburg's Owen Marsh is one of three returning seniors this season for the Wildcat boys basketball team.

After a difficult season a year ago, the Louisburg boys basketball team opens tonight with a renewed sense of confidence – and a roster eager to seize larger roles.

The Wildcats finished 3-17 last winter and graduated six seniors who logged heavy minutes, leaving plenty of opportunity for new contributors. But head coach Ben Doll says the growth he saw over the summer has the group feeling energized.

"The guys have been working really hard in practice and they are excited for the season for sure," Doll said. "We won't be young in age, necessarily, but we will be young experience-wise. We return a few guys from last year, but we will also be relying on a lot of other guys to play bigger roles who really didn't see much varsity time last year. Everyone will have bigger roles to play and I am excited to see what they do with this opportunity."

Louisburg returns three seniors – guards Derek Frederick and Owen Marsh, along with forward Parker Stanfield. Frederick and Marsh started at different points last season and are the team's top returning scorers after each averaged around four points per game.

Doll is counting on both guards to take steps forward offensively.

"Derek had a little bit of down year shooting for him, but I really expect him to bounce back and he has a really good shot," Doll said. "Owen can also shoot from the outside, especially in the mid-range, and is a good ball handler for us as well."



Louisburg senior Derek Frederick is back to help lead the Wildcats for the upcoming season.

Sophomore forward Herschel Strumberger, who played significant

varsity minutes as a freshman, returns as a key presence inside alongside Stanfield.

“Parker is a kid who started out on junior varsity, but got a varsity opportunity during the season and got more minutes as the season went along,” Doll said. “Herschel was thrown in there as a freshman, but was a good post player for us last year and has gotten better as well. Those two guys along with some others like Eli Roth and Jack Flaming will play those post spots for us this year.”

On the perimeter, junior Lance Callahan returns after averaging just under four points per game and stands as the Wildcats’ top outside threat. Doll said Callahan could be poised for a bigger breakout.

“Lance is a shooter who works so much on his shot and I think he can take another step forward as well,” he said.

Sophomore guard John Guetterman is expected to log major minutes as well, part of a backcourt group that Doll believes will be the catalyst for Louisburg’s style of play.

“We have a lot of guards that are quick and can shoot the ball,” Doll said. “We don’t necessarily have a true point guard, but we have a lot of guys who can bring the ball up the floor and just push it, which is what we want to do. We want to go fast and play up tempo.”

While the Wildcats struggled last season, Doll believes momentum began shifting this summer.

“We really needed to get some positive experiences after a tough year last year and I thought we did a lot of great things over the summer,” he said. “We won the KAMO tournament and had a winning record in the Baldwin tournament we played in, and we played without Herschel who was injured. Those were great experiences for our guys and it is something we can build on going into the season.”

The challenge now is translating that progress into wins in what may be one of the deepest Frontier League fields in years. Ottawa returns from a state third-place finish with just one loss on the year. Baldwin enters ranked No. 1 in Class 4A, and Bonner Springs reached the Class 5A state tournament last season. Nearly every league opponent brings back veteran talent.

“Our league is very tough this year and there are no easy games,” Doll said. “You can just look at the all-league list from last season and there was maybe one or two seniors on the first and second teams. All of the teams in the league have experienced players coming back and it will be tough. We are an improved team that works hard and gets after it. We know it will be a tough schedule, but I know the guys are looking forward to the challenge.”

Louisburg opens its season tonight at home against Wellsville. Tip-off is set for 7:30 p.m.

Louisburg girls basketball looks to rebuild as new season begins



Louisburg junior Morgan Latham goes up for a shot during a game last season. Latham is one of two Wildcats returning who saw significant varsity minutes a season ago.

After graduating seven seniors and navigating a difficult Frontier League, the Louisburg girls basketball team enters the 2025-26 season knowing it will have a different look to it.

The Wildcats finished 5-16 a year ago and return just two varsity players in senior forwards Morgan Latham and McKenna Lohse, both of whom were steady contributors in the post. Latham averaged close to six points and five rebounds per game, while Lohse added five points and four boards.

Louisburg head coach Adrianne Lane said the group has embraced the challenge of starting fresh.

“Practice has been great so far. This group is working very

hard and they are very coachable," Lane said. "Since we do not have a lot of returning varsity players, the girls have been very willing to learn new things and very willing to put these new things into action."

Experience will be one of the Wildcats' biggest hurdles.

"The biggest challenge will be lack of experience on the varsity level," Lane said. "But I do feel that this group is willing to put in the effort and hard work to be ready for the varsity level."



Louisburg senior McKenna Lohse returns to help lead the Wildcats.

Even so, Louisburg believes it can lean heavily on its post players. Junior Kinley Scott, who saw varsity action last season, joins Latham and Lohse to give the Wildcats one of their most reliable areas.

“Having Kenna and Morgan back this year is huge for our program. They are doing a great job working with the younger girls and helping them learn the new plays,” Lane said. “Getting Kenna and Morgan touches in the lane will be very important. Most of our offenses revolve around the bigs, and I think Kenna and Morgan and the other bigs are ready.”

Lane also expects Scott to make a significant leap.

“Kinley has been playing very well in practice and I am excited to see how she does in the games,” Lane said. “She is a huge threat with the basketball and I think we will see a lot of offense out of her this year.”

But if the Wildcats are strong inside, the guard spots will feature fresh faces. Juniors Maddie Yoder and Ellia Gibbons, who received limited varsity time last season, are set to anchor the backcourt. Yoder will run the offense at point guard.

“Maddie Yoder will play a big part this year. She will be the point guard and she does a great job taking care of the basketball,” Lane said. “She is very fun to watch and makes some great passes.

“Ellia is another returner, she works very hard and plays hard. She will bring some excitement to the floor as well as hustle.”

Juniors Ella Bockelman and McKinley Harmon will also see extended minutes on the wings as Louisburg builds a new rotation.

The Wildcats open their season tonight at home against Wellsville, tipping off at 6 p.m., and Lane believes the foundation is in place for steady growth.

“This group is willing to put in the effort and hard work,” she said. “I’m excited to see how far they can go.”

Kuhlman excited to reunite with familiar faces at Avila



Louisburg grad Ashlyn Kuhlman is looking forward to joining the Avila basketball program this coming season.

Ashlyn Kuhlman has played basketball for most of her young life and isn’t ready to slow down anytime soon.

The 2025 Louisburg High School graduate has played a big role on the Wildcat girls basketball team for the last two seasons and is ready to continue that at the collegiate level. It didn’t take her long to find the right landing spot.

Earlier this year, in front of friends and family, Kuhlman signed her letter of intent to play basketball at Avila University and is looking forward to the opportunity of helping out the Eagles' program.

"It has been a goal of mine to play in college since I was really young," Kuhlman said. "When I started playing club I knew that I would want to continue for as long as I could. It felt so special seeing my dream become reality on my signing day with the support of my friends and family."

Kuhlman knew Avila well and that was before any official visit. Her sister, Brianne, played for the Eagles last season and the two will get a chance to share the court together this winter.

Having the chance to share time with her sister, along with everything Avila had to offer, made for an easy decision for Ashlyn as she achieved her dream of playing college basketball.

"I started playing basketball when I was in first grade and it has been a huge part of my life with countless hours being put into it," Ashlyn said. "The environment of Avila really stuck out to me. When I stepped on the campus to watch my sister play for the first time, I knew it felt like home."



Louisburg's Ashlyn Kuhlman signed her letter of intent to join the Avila basketball program. Seated next to Ashlyn are her parents Holly and Brian Kuhlman. Standing is her sister Brianne, her brother Ethan and Avila coach Remy Wolfe

However, her sister won't be the only familiar face on the Avila roster. She will also join Louisburg graduates Madilyn Melton and Ava Baker on the team that will now feature four former Wildcat players.

"It is so nice to have others on the team that are from Louisburg because it helped me feel like I could fit in quicker," Ashlyn said. "Also I am so excited to be able to play with my sister and share my first year of college experience with her. I believe that having all these people I know around me will help the transition because they all are very supportive and have taken me in already."

Kuhlman had a pair of successful seasons for the Wildcat basketball program as she earned honorable mention all-league honors the last two years.

She averaged 10.3 points per game to lead the Wildcats and recorded a team-high five rebounds a contest. Kuhlman, who played mainly the guard spot, also tallied a team-best 41 blocks.

As for what the future holds, Kuhlman is just willing to help the team in any way she can.

“I hope to fit in well with the team and be able to play with my sister this year,” she said. “I am very excited for everything that is in store for me.”

Kansas makes changes to state basketball format

Press Release from the Kansas High School Activities Association

TOPEKA, Kan. – The KSHSAA State Basketball Tournament format and sites have been selected for the next two seasons. In

2026, the 1A Division I semifinals and finals will be played at United Wireless Arena in Dodge City. The 2A and 1A Division II semifinals and finals will be played at White Auditorium in Emporia while 3A and 4A semifinals and finals will be played at The Hutchinson Sports Arena at Hutchinson Community College.

In the largest school classifications, 5A and 6A semifinals and finals will be played at Koch Arena at Wichita State University. This will mark the first time since 1953 when state championship games of multiple classes were played at the same place.

In 2027, both Divisions of 1A semifinals and finals will be played at Tony's Pizza Events Center in Salina. Class 2A and Class 4A semifinals and finals will be played at Bramlage Coliseum in Manhattan. The 3A semifinals and finals will be played at The Sports Arena at Hutchinson Community College. The 5A and 6A semifinals will be played at White Auditorium in Emporia.

"The KSHSAA is an association of member schools, and the school leaders have asked for class consolidation of championships." said KSHSAA Executive Director Bill Faflick. "This new format will achieve that result and provide a greater focus on the student athletes competing at the highest level with four state title games being played consecutively on championship Saturday. This modification allows basketball to follow the recently implemented format for championship soccer and football championship games. With more titles being determined at one location, the atmosphere in the championship arenas will be at an all-time high."

The state tournament begins with the quarterfinal round which will be hosted at seven venues in five cities. To advance to the semifinals and finals sites, teams will need to win the state quarterfinal round games which will be played at United Wireless Arena, Tony's Pizza Events Center in Salina, Mabee

Arena at Kansas Wesleyan University, Koch Arena, Garvey Center at Friends University, White Auditorium, and the Kansas City Kansas Community College Fieldhouse in Kansas City.

2026 State Basketball Tournament Quarterfinal Schedule:

6A, 4A, 2A Girls, 5A, 3A, 1A Boys Quarterfinals – March 10 (United Wireless Arena, Koch Arena, Friends University, Tony's Pizza Events Center, Kansas Wesleyan University, White Auditorium, KCKCC Fieldhouse)

5A, 3A, 1A Girls, 6A, 4A, 2A Boys Quarterfinals – March 11 (United Wireless Arena, Koch Arena, Friends University, Tony's Pizza Events Center, Kansas Wesleyan University, White Auditorium, KCKCC Fieldhouse)

The quarterfinal round games are determined by proximity to the higher seed, not class. The highest four seeds of the state tournament will be placed as close to home as possible in the 28 quarterfinal round games across the state. If the distance from the lower seed is greater than 250 miles from where the game would be played near the higher seed, that game will be played at one of the quarterfinal sites centrally located. State brackets will not be reseeded after the state quarterfinals.

"With the top four seeds earning the right to play close to home, the quarterfinal rounds will provide a better environment and experience allowing more friends and family to attend the quarterfinal round," said KSHSAA Assistant Executive Director and Basketball Administrator Kyle Doperalski. "This new format is a win for teams and school communities with an incredible atmosphere of four state championship games in the same venue on the same day. Fans and media along with non-advancing teams and coaches will have less decisions to make about what site to go to and watch the teams and players they want to see at the state tournament."

The dates of the quarterfinal games are March 10-11, 2026 and March 9-10, 2027. The dates of the semifinals and finals are March 12-14, 2026 and March 11-13, 2027.

Two years ago, the membership expressed desire through the October Regional Administrator Meetings to combine classes at the state basketball tournament. Each class individually supported this concept. Working with the host sites to ensure top level tournament management, it was determined that the best course of action is the final four in each class advance to the site of the semifinals and finals with state quarterfinal games being played in proximity to the higher seed at neutral/college sites.