

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 is 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 it 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.

Wildcats fall to Shawnee Mission East in final game before holidays



Louisburg senior Dawson Barnes goes up for two points during a game earlier this season. The Wildcats fell to Shawnee Mission East on Thursday, 74-50.

With its next opponent, Piper, in quarantine due to COVID-19, Louisburg worked to find an opponent the Wildcats could play before the holiday break.

The Wildcats found a talented one in Shawnee Mission East. Louisburg traveled to the Lancers on Thursday and went up against the No. 7 team in Class 6A. Louisburg quickly found out why they are one of the teams to beat in the state's largest classification.

Shawnee Mission East took a 12-point lead at halftime, but it extended it even more in the second half and the Wildcats fell, 74-50.

"SME was a good challenge for us," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "Their length and ball pressure caused us some problems, but I thought we competed hard. It was a much more physical game in how it was called, so it took our boys a while to adjust to that style of play. We probably won't see another team with that much size across the board, but I think we will definitely learn from this game."

“East is ranked in 6A for a reason. They’ve got a nice team. When you play against good teams, they expose your weaknesses. We have some things we need to clean up and work on moving forward. We are definitely better for having played a good team like them”

Senior point guard Weston Guetterman provided a bulk of the Wildcat offense as he scored nearly half of the team’s points. Guetterman finished with a team-high 23 points and also had two assists and a pair of steals.

Junior forward Julian Margrave also had a big game for the Wildcats as he added 17 points and seven rebounds. Michael Seuferling and Ben Guetterman each had five points to round out the Louisburg scoring.

The Wildcats (3-2) still found themselves in the game and were only by 12 at halftime, but the Lancers’ offense had the Wildcats on their heels as they scored 44 in the second half to pull away.

Louisburg will now have the challenge of going on a long winter moratorium that won’t allow the Wildcats to practice together until Jan. 5. Three days later Louisburg will travel to Eudora for its first game of 2021.

Still, Pfannenstiel is happy with where his team is at heading into the new year.

“I think our season is off to a good start,” he said. “We’ve already had a few hiccups to our schedule because of COVID, but our kids have rolled with it and made the most of their opportunities. We’ve played a tough schedule so far. I don’t think we are satisfied with being 3-2, but we know where we are and where we need to improve. Our team will never shy away from a challenge, so I think this season is going to be a lot of fun because the Frontier League is a dog fight each night.

“Once we get a chance to get back together after the KSHSAA

mandatory two week moratorium, it will be a grind the rest of the way. With all things considered, we are happy and fortunate to be playing basketball and hopefully our hard work and effort on the court will display that.”

LOU 7 11 12 20 – 50

SME 14 16 20 24 – 74

LOUISBURG (3-2): Weston Guetterman 9-12 2-2 23; Julian Margrave 6-15 5-5 17; Michael Seuferling 2-6 1-2 5; Ben Guetterman 2-9 1-4 5. Totals: 19-46 9-13 50. 3-point field goals: 3, (W. Guetterman 3)

Despite slow start, Wildcats roll Baldwin



Louisburg senior Weston Guetterman drives to the basket for two of his team-high 19 points Friday against Baldwin.

It wasn't the start the Louisburg boys basketball team had hoped for Tuesday against Baldwin.

Baldwin scored the first eight points of the game to take a decent sized lead, but it was the way the Wildcats finished that more than made up for the slow start.

The Wildcats scored 27 points in the fourth quarter and held

the Bulldogs to 28 points in the final three quarters to pick up a 70-41 win at Louisburg High School. It was Louisburg's third straight victory since its season opening loss to Tonganoxie.

"We definitely struggled out of the gate getting down 8-0, but managed to work our way back into it," Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "We were pretty effective defensively all night, but it took us awhile to get things going offensively. Defense has to be a constant each night. There will be nights that things don't go your way offensively, but if you play well defensively, you're always going to have a shot."

It was the defense that sparked the Wildcats when they didn't have their best night offensively.

Louisburg forced 20 turnovers on the night that turned into 27 points and outscored the Bulldogs in transition, 18-0. The Wildcats also controlled the glass as they outrebounded Baldwin 44-31.

"We want to really pressure teams with our defense," Pfannenstiel said. "We've done a pretty good job of that the last few games. If we can make teams uncomfortable, that usually results in some turnovers that can jump start our offense."

"I thought we are pretty good on both ends in the second half. I really liked the tempo of the game in the second half. That's how we want to play this year. Our hope is that our style will wear teams down late in games. So far it's been positive for us."

Down 8-0 to open the game, it was senior point guard Weston Guetterman that helped bring the Wildcats back. Guetterman scored eight straight to tie the game and then Maverick Rockers knocked down a 3-pointer to complete the 11-0 run.

The Wildcats (3-1) were down two points going into the second

quarter and it would be the last time they trailed.



Junior Michael Seuferling pulls up for a 3-pointer Tuesday against Baldwin.

Louisburg took a 10-point lead into the final quarter and then the Wildcats took off as they outscored Baldwin 27-8 to end the contest. The Wildcat did a lot of their damage inside as they outscored the Bulldogs 40-10 in the paint.

Guetterman led the Wildcats in scoring as he had a good night from the field. He finished with a game-high 19 points to go along with six rebounds and three steals.

Two other Wildcats also scored in double figures. Junior Michael Seuferling scored 15 points, while senior Ben Guetterman added 12 points and six rebounds.

Junior Julian Margrave was big on the glass for Louisburg as

he pulled down a team-high 14 rebounds and added two steals and a block.

“Weston has been great for us all year,” Pfannenstiel said. “He really sets the tempo for us and picked us up offensively. It was a good team win. Everybody contributed and played great team basketball. Time to get back to the practice court and prepare for the next one.”

That next one is tonight when the Wildcats travel to Shawnee Mission East for the final game before the holiday break. Tipoff is set for 6:30 p.m.

LOU 11 13 19 27 – 70

BAL 13 9 11 8 – 41

LOUISBURG (3-1): Weston Guetterman 8-16 2-3 19; Michael Seuferling 6-12 2-3 15; Ben Guetterman 3-11 5-6 12; Maverick Rockers 3-6 0-0 7; Julian Margrave 3-13 0-1 6; Dawson Barnes 2-2 0-0 4; Konnor Vohs 1-2 1-1 3; Andy Hupp 1-1 0-0 2; Isaac Guetterman 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 28-64 10-14 70. 3-point field goals: 4, (Seuferling, W. Guetterman, Rockers, B. Guetterman)

Week 2 Athlete of the Week: Julian Margrave



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week two of the winter sports season, sponsored by Landmark National Bank.

JULIAN MARGRAVE, JUNIOR, BOYS BASKETBALL

Louisburg junior Julian Margrave had a big week for the Wildcat boys basketball team as he helped the Wildcats to their first two wins of the season. His biggest game came last week against Harrisonville as he scored 26 points in an overtime victory, which was the Wildcats' first of the season.

On the week, Margrave averaged 19.5 points a game to go along with 7.5 rebounds and 2.5 blocks.

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.

Previous winners:

Week 1: Jordan Mynsted



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Defense sparks Wildcats in win over Anderson County



Louisburg senior Dawson Barnes picks off an Anderson County pass Friday in Garnett. That steal was one of 20 turnovers the Wildcats forced on the night.

GARNETT – The Louisburg boys basketball team wasn't always clicking on all cylinders Friday against Anderson County, but when they were, the Wildcats made things difficult on the Bulldogs.

Louisburg used a pair of big runs – one in each half – to pull away from Anderson County, 63-48, at Anderson County High School and earned their second straight win in the process.

Defensively, it was one of the Wildcats' better contests of the early season and was able to spur their offense. Louisburg forced 20 turnovers and scored 29 points off those Anderson County mistakes to help get their first road win of the year.

“Our emphasis from the start of the season has been to play aggressive and play relentless defensively and I thought we were really good in that area,” Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. “We weren't the best offensively, especially in the half court, but part of it was because a lot of our offense was because of our defense. We were scoring points, but would like to see us a little sharper in the half-

court and more patient, but I really thought our defense was great.”

The Wildcats (2-1) took a convincing 37-19 lead at halftime after they outscored Anderson County by 13 in the second quarter. The Bulldogs cut the Louisburg lead to 10 midway through the third quarter, but the Wildcats ended the frame on a 15-2 run.

All of those points in the run were from behind the 3-point line as five different players knocked down the perimeter shots. Michael Seuferling, Julian Margrave, Konnor Vohs, Weston Guetterman and Maverick Rockers helped extend the Louisburg lead to 56-31 going into the fourth quarter and the Wildcats never looked back



Junior Julian Margrave tries for a dunk off a missed shot Friday against Anderson County.

“We needed it that is for sure,” Pfannenstiel said. “We talked about at halftime that we needed to put this away in the third

quarter and we came out about as flat as you can be. I am not sure why, but we answered and responded and that is important.

“A lot of those were good unselfish plays like drive and kicks and rhythm shots. That is where we were lacking in the first half is we were trying to do too much individually and not enough team-oriented basketball. That run was sparked buy playing team basketball.”

Louisburg had four different players score in double figures and Guetterman led the way with a team-high 15 points. Margrave finished with 13 points to go along with six rebounds and a pair of blocks.



Senior Konnor Vohs scores two of his 10 points against Anderson County. Vohs was one of four Wildcats to score in double figures.

Ben Guetterman added 11 points in the victory and had a team-high three steals. Vohs finished with 10 points.

“That is how it should be,” Pfannenstiel said of the team’s balanced scoring. “If one guys is off, or a couple guys are off, then other guys should be able to step up and they did that. We were very balanced and that was definitely good for us.”

Louisburg will try to make it three in a row tonight and will

try for its first league win of year when it hosts Baldwin for a 6 p.m. tipoff. The Wildcats also had to take Piper off its schedule for Thursday due to COVID-19, so instead they will travel to Shawnee Mission East for a 6:30 p.m. start.

“Baldwin had just played Anderson County and played them tough, so it will be a challenge,” Pfannenstiel said. “They are always a hard-nosed team, and then we were able to find Shawnee Mission East to replace Piper and these are two good matchups for us. We tell the boys all the time that we are fortunate that we are getting the opportunity to play and we are going to show that on the court with how hard we play. Hopefully we can have some fun in the process.”

LOU 14 23 17 9 – 63

AC 9 10 12 17 – 48

LOUISBURG (2-1): Weston Guetterman 6-7 2-2 15; Julian Margrave 5-13 2-3 13; Ben Guetterman 3-6 5-6 11; Konnor Vohs 4-5 0-0 10; Michael Seuferling 2-5 0-0 6; Maverick Rockers 1-1 0-0 3; Dawson Barnes 1-3 1-2 3; Andy Hupp 1-5 0-0 2. Totals: 23-47 10-13 63. 3-point field goals: 7, (Seuferling 2, Vohs 2, W. Guetterman, Rockers, Margrave).

**Overtime victory gives
Wildcats their first win**



Louisburg senior Weston Guetterman drives through the lane for a layup Tuesday at home against Harrisonville.

The Louisburg boys basketball team off to a good start Tuesday in its home game against Harrisonville, but it had an even better finish.

After staking itself an eight point lead after the first quarter, Louisburg found itself down six points early in the fourth quarter. In what was a back and forth contest, the Wildcats were able to force an extra period and eventually win, 67-62, in overtime.

“Harrisonville went on some runs and we answered,” Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. “We came up big at the end of regulation and in overtime when we got down. Something about us, when we realize that we have to make plays, that we find ways to do it. I told them right before overtime that this game was going to be won on the defensive end and that is what sparked us. We got a couple steals there and it was huge for us. It was a fun game.”

The Wildcats (1-1) got on a roll to start the fourth when senior Weston Guetterman cut the Harrisonville lead in half as he scored, was fouled and converted the 3-point play. Junior Julian Margrave added six straight points on his own to tie it at 52-all midway through the fourth.

Harrisonville hit a 3-pointer to break the tie, but junior Michael Seuferling knocked down a shot and Weston Guetterman hit two free throws to put Louisburg up one with 2 minutes remaining. Louisburg found itself down two when Ben Guetterman

was fouled and hit both free throws to help send it to overtime.

Defense took over for Louisburg as the Wildcats recorded three steals in the extra period. One from Weston Guetterman that led to a runout score, another from Ben Guetterman that led to a layup and the final one from junior Maverick Rockers that led to a Ben Guetterman layup to give Louisburg a four-point lead with 45 seconds left.



Senior Ben Guetterman puts a shot up in the lane Tuesday against Harrisonville.

Margrave had a big night for Louisburg as he finished with a team-high 26 points, with 13 of those coming in the first

quarter. He also added a team-high nine rebounds and three blocks

“Julian had a great night,” Pfannenstiel said. “He is a good player that works hard at it. When we can get the ball in his hands, good things usually happen. I am not sure why he wasn’t able to get as many touches as he did in the first quarter, but this is team basketball. When he gets attention from multiple defenders, that opens things up for other guys. It was a big night for Julian and it is something we expect from him every night.”

Weston Guetterman also had a solid outing for Louisburg with 14 points and eight rebounds from the point guard spot, to go along with four steals and three assists. Ben Guetterman added eight points and seven rebounds, most of which came in the fourth quarter and overtime.

Louisburg also got good production from its bench as senior Konnor Vohs finished with seven points off the bench, while Rockers gave the Wildcats good minutes late in the contest and scored five points.

“I thought our bench was huge,” Pfannenstiel said. “Konnor came in early and did a very good job. He shot the ball well and played good defense. Mav is never going to be the biggest kid on the floor, but he always looks comfortable out there. He is our second ball handler and he was big for us late. He played well for us defensively, but he was a lot of the reason why our offense was doing so well at times because other guys are comfortable with him out there.”

Harrisonville’s Brooks Langrehr had a big night for the Wildcats as he scored a game-high 34 points.

Louisburg will try for its second straight win today when it travels to Anderson County for its first road test of the season. Tipoff is set for 7:30 p.m.

LOU	22	10	11
15	9 – 67		
HAR	14	19	13
12	4 – 62		

LOUISBURG (1-1): Julian Margrave 11-16 2-2 26; Weston Guetterman 4-12 6-9 14; Ben Guetterman 3-15 2-2 8; Konnor Vohs 3-5 0-0 7; Maverick Rockers 1-1 2-4 5; Michael Seuferling 2-10 0-0 4; Andy Hupp 1-5 0-0 3. Totals: 25-65 12-17 67. 3-point field goals: 5, (Margrave 2, Rockers, Vohs, Hupp)

Wildcats' rally falls short in season opener



Junior Julian Margrave goes up for a dunk Friday during the Wildcats' season opener against Tonganoxie.

There was no easy game out of the gate for the Louisburg boys basketball team as the Wildcats squared off with No. 5 Tonganoxie in their season opener.

The challenge was a difficult one and the Chieftains lived up to their preseason ranking.

Tonganoxie racked up nearly 40 points in the first half, and despite a late rally from Louisburg, handed the Wildcats their

first loss of the season, 63-56.

“You never really know what you are going to get in these first games,” Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. “Sometimes you get some real ugly ones or get some really up-tempo games, and Tonganoxie came out pretty hot. Our guys battled back, and even though there were a couple times there were a deer in the headlights look, they hung in there. They battled back possession by possession and we were a different team in the fourth quarter. Tonganoxie played really well, and we weren’t bad by any means, they were just better this time.”

Louisburg found itself down 51-38 heading into the fourth quarter, but used its defense to get back in the game. The Wildcats ramped up their full-court pressure and it helped lead to an 11-2 run that cut the Tonganoxie lead to 53-52.

Weston Guetterman opened the quarter with seven straight points, including a 3-pointer, a steal and a layup and a drive to the basket in which he was fouled. Ben Guetterman ended the run with a 3-pointer to give the Wildcats all the momentum.



Seniors Andy Hupp (23) and Weston Guetterman converge to force a Tonganoxie turnover Friday.

Unfortunately, the Chieftains were able to hold off Louisville as they went on a mini 7-2 run of their own and hit their free throws down the stretch to seal the win.

“That is how we started off the game,” Pfannenstiel said of the press. “We were running the same things, we were just better at it in the fourth quarter. We were a little more desperate and so our energy was better. The issue in the first half is we weren’t as aggressive. Tongie’s guards were comfortable throwing the ball ahead. The way we looked in the fourth quarter is how we want to look all the time out of our

press. I'm glad we were able to see it be successful because we know now that if we play like that we can do some good things."

Turnovers hurt the Wildcats as the Chieftains forced 16 Louisburg turnovers and turned those into 17 points.

It was a back and forth game to begin the night as the two teams traded baskets and Tonganoxie held 20-17 lead after the first quarter. It was the second quarter where the Chieftains did their damage as they outscored Louisburg 19-11 in the frame and took an 11-point halftime lead.

"We played pretty well defensively, but we gave up almost 40 in the first half," Pfannenstiel said. "Offensively, I think we just got sped up a little bit and there are some footwork issues that can be fixed. Had a lot of mental errors, but we will get better."

Only four players scored on the night for Louisburg. Weston Guetterman led the Wildcats offensively with 20 points to go along with a team-high four assists and four steals.

Junior Julian Margrave also had a big night as he recorded a double-double with 17 points and 10 rebounds. Ben Guetterman also scored in double figures with 13 and junior Michael Seuferling added six points, five rebounds and three assists.

Louisburg will try and bounce back tonight as it hosts Harrisonville (Mo.) at 7:30 p.m. The Wildcats were supposed to host Burlington, but it was recently forced to quarantine.

LOU	17	11	10	18	-
56					
TON	20	19	12	12	-
63					

LOUISBURG (0-1): Weston Guetterman 7-11 4-5 20; Julian Margrave 7-15 1-2 17; Ben Guetterman 5-11 1-2 13; Michael

Seuferling 2-6 0-0 6. Totals: 21-49 6-9 56. 3-point field goals: 8, (Seuferling 2, W. Guetterman 2, B. Guetterman 2, Margrave 2).

Wildcats hope to make big jump from last season



Louisburg's leading scorer from a year ago, Julian Margrave, returns to lead the Wildcats after a first-team all-league performance last season.

It may have happened more than nine months ago, but the final loss of last season has stuck in the minds of several members of the Louisburg boys basketball program.

The Wildcats rallied from 20 points down in the fourth quarter of their first round playoff game against Iola to force overtime, and scored 32 points in the frame. Louisburg didn't have enough and eventually fell in the extra period.

It was lesson that was realized the hard way – a lesson to play the game hard from start to finish.

“We definitely learned from that loss at the end of the year,” Louisburg coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. “What really hurt us that game was our inability to get stops in the first three quarters, which led to the big deficit. Once we realized our

season was on the line and we started playing with more energy and aggressiveness, that sparked our run.

“That’s our goal this year is to play with relentless energy each game. We have no idea what this season is going to bring this year, so we have to play each game like it might be our last. If we can play with that fourth quarter desperation for all four quarters, I like our chances in every game we play this year. Now it’s time to put it to the test.”

That first test comes today when the Wildcats host Tonganoxie, which is currently ranked No. 5 in Class 4A, for 7:30 p.m. tipoff.

Louisburg seems well-prepared for that first test as the Wildcats return all but two starters from a season ago, in which they finished with an 8-13 record. The Wildcats also return six seniors in Weston Guetterman, Ben Guetterman, Konnor Vohs, Charlie Peters, Andy Hupp and Dawson Barnes, and with first-team all-league player Julian Margrave in the mix, they are an experienced group.

“We return 80 percent of our scoring from last year, and I think we’ve added more depth this year as well,” Pfannenstiel said. “Our practices have been very competitive so I think the competition for varsity minutes will elevate our play, not only in games, but in practice. It’s been fun watching this senior class develop over the years.

“We return three starters, (who were all All-League players) from last year, and lots of other guys that saw significant court time as well. We lost a starting guard and post player, but I think we have guys ready to fill those voids. We definitely like what we have returning and look forward to making a jump this year.”

One player who hopes to take another big step forward this year is Margrave. The Louisburg junior was among the Frontier League’s best last season as he was a unanimous first team

selection as he averaged 16 points and seven rebounds a contest.

The 6-foot-9 forward will be the focus of a lot of opposition most nights, but Pfannenstiel is looking forward to seeing how much he has improved.

“Julian had a great sophomore season,” Pfannenstiel said. “He was a unanimous 1st Team All-League player, which is hard to do as a sophomore in the Frontier League. As good as he was last year, I’ve already seen improvement this year. He’s still growing into his body and he’s much more explosive this year. His continued effort and work in the weight room is evident by that. Julian works hard on his game. He’s always the first one to arrive and the last one to leave the gym each day. He has a chance to have a special year.”



Ben Guetterman is one of six returning seniors for the Wildcat

basketball team this season.

Also returning are guards Weston and Ben Guetterman. Both players were honorable mention all-league players last season.

Weston averaged 11.2 points, to go along with four assists and a four rebounds a game. Ben finished the year as he averaged 11.1 points a contest and 5.5 rebounds. Weston is the team's returning point guard and Pfannenstiel knows that leadership will be valuable on and off the court.

"Weston has been solid for us," Pfannenstiel said. "This will be his third year as a starter, so we will rely on his consistency and ability to lead on the floor. Weston sets the tempo for us, so we expect big things out of him this year."

Vohs and juniors Maverick Rockers, Michael Seufferling and Isaac Guetterman will also be called upon to play plenty of varsity minutes at the guard spots as each contributed a season ago. Peters, Barnes and Hupp will also be a presence down low for the Wildcats.

To add on to what is already a difficult league schedule, the Wildcats also have to try and plan for an impossible opponent – COVID-19. Louisburg has already faced challenges on how to work around all the guidelines, but the players are excited to just be able to play.

"We were fortunate to be able to have a camp this summer, but that was about it," Pfannenstiel said. "We usually play 20-25 games in the summer and that was not allowed, so we lost all of that summer prep. Already this season, we were missing four players from practice due to quarantines, but we have everyone back now.

"The biggest change this year is how we practice. We have to cohort our JV and varsity guys for practice so we've really had to adjust our practice routine to allow for that. Coach (Drew) Harding and myself are going to be in better shape now

because we have to be an extra body in 5 on 5 situations. All of the changes do make it difficult, but we all feel fortunate that we are getting the opportunity to play, so we will do whatever is necessary for that to happen.”

KSHSAA votes to start winter sports on time, will not allow spectators



The 2020-21 winter sports season may have a little different look than in the past, but there is one thing that will remain the same – the student athletes will be out competing.

During the Kansas High School Activities Association Board of Directors meeting Tuesday, the board voted in favor to have winter sports continue as scheduled by a 53-22 decision. The meeting was in response to the Executive Board’s proposal last week to delay winter sport till Jan. 15.

Instead, schools around the state will be able to kick off their seasons in early December, and then after a moratorium for Christmas Break, can resume competition on Jan. 8. The basketball, wrestling and swim teams will also be able to have a full schedule of events, barring cancellations due to the spread of COVID-19.

"I'm extremely happy and relieved on how KSHSAA voted regarding winter sports being able to happen," Louisburg senior Megan Foote said. "Sports are extremely important to students as it not only helps with physical health, but also provides a release for mental health. Athletes can depend on sports to be an outlet for the troubling feelings they may have. As someone who struggles with mental health, I can vouch for how important sports are. Sports provide some of the best memories and times a kid can have and I believe they're essential in today's world."

During the meeting, eight different people – from parents to physicians – spoke on behalf of letting competition resume and two of those were Louisburg parents Craig Holtzen and Jenny Diederich.

Holtzen, whose son Cade is a senior on the Wildcat wrestling team, gave opening remarks in which he tried to convey the importance of extracurricular activities, even during COVID-19 times.

"There is no evidence to suggest that kids are either super-spreaders or very susceptible to this virus to begin with," Holtzen said during the meeting. "I would dare go far enough to say that kids are practicing better virus protocol when they are in school or activities than when they are locked down."

"Fall activities were largely successful because of our ability to be flexible and adaptive to the many changing things that happened over that season."

The vote to let them play was a sigh of relief to many players and coaches around the state, who were already in the process of prepping for their season.

"This is great news for our kids," Louisburg boys basketball coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. "Our students and athletes have been so resilient this year with all the new protocols, so I'm

happy for them to get their opportunity because they've been through a lot. There was a lot of concern among our kids, so I'm sure they're relieved now that the uncertainty has been resolved. We are definitely not out of the woods yet when it comes to setbacks, so we have to continue to do our part to stay safe and healthy throughout this season."

Following the decision by the executive board last week to delay the start of winter sports, Diederich started a Facebook group called "Rally the Troops to Fight for Winter School Sports."

The page attracted more than 4,000 followers and advocated for parents and players to email and call the board of directors to let them know how important the winter season was for all of them. It seemed to work as the measure to allow them to play passed easily.

"Yesterday was a victory," Diederich said. "It was exactly what we were fighting for – a full season with 20 games that starts on time. I am as passionate as they come and would love to be in the stands but my main goal was to get my daughter and her teammates on the court. With all the uncertainty they need something to focus on and to look forward to. It is just as important mentally as it is physically. I was proud to be part of a group of families across the state that fought for all our student athletes and scholars. I think it taught our kids to use their voice."

Although many of the teams were already gearing up for the season, there has always been a cloud hanging over the programs whether the season was going to happen or not. Now, those players and coaches can resume with more confidence.

"I'm very grateful for the chance to get the kids back on the mat," Louisburg wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird said. "All year I've been wondering about the unknowns, whether we'll get a season or not. But we've been practicing for a week and a

half, and things are feeling more like normal than they have all year.

“This season, we’ve got the theme ‘Relentless,’ and that’s the mindset we’re trying to implement. Things like the KSHSAA ruling, the potential to get quarantined, and more are the obstacles in the way of our success. We’ve got to be relentless and work together to find ways around them.”

The meeting was bittersweet for most parents as the board of directors voted that the athletic events will be held without spectators on both the high school and middle school levels. The measure passed by a 50-26 vote and spectators will not be allowed from Dec. 1 to Jan. 28.

Following that time, fan attendance will be limited in accordance with local attendance policies.

“I believe we had a solid plan to allow fans to attend our games in a safe manner,” USD 416 superintendent Dr. Brian Biermann said. “We had already had indoor sports for middle school girls’ basketball and middle school wrestling and it was working well. Now, that fans are not allowed, we will strive to provide our fans a quality livestream option to allow them to cheer on our Wildcats.

“I am glad that the board of directors decided to allow our kids to participate in sports. Our coaches and student-athletes have adhered to every possible safety measure. I know our kids are excited to represent the Wildcats on the mat, court and swimming pool in the upcoming weeks.

From some players’ point of view, while getting to play their season was the most important outcome from Tuesday’s meeting, the fact of not having their parents there is tough to comprehend.

“Basketball is a momentum sport and fans are a huge part of that,” Foote said. “I believe we have one of the best student

sections for girls' basketball. When we get into a rough patch, our student section gets louder and helps us out of that. I also have a lot of family that is extremely supportive and loves to watch me play. Not having them there is gut wrenching, especially my dad. Having my parents and family there is huge to me.

"Sadly, this is what it has come to. Right now all we can do is work together as a team and be each other's support system. We have to depend on each other to be loud and hype each other up. I still hold hope that this unreasonable ruling will be turned around, but I'm incredibly grateful that I can have one last season with my best friends."

Not only players, but coaches having to instruct their players in an empty gymnasium will take some getting used to as well.

"I am so happy for the student athletes who get to play winter sports and I am super excited to see what this season brings," Louisburg girls basketball coach Adrienne Lane said. "Basketball is an extracurricular activity, but it is also a chance for these students to come together and be a team. Playing in an empty gym will be a change, but I think the athletes will mainly be grateful for their opportunity to play."

Even though some parents will have to get used to watching their child on the computer or television, instead of in-person, they are hoping they will be able to back in the gym sooner rather than later.

"I was a little surprised with the no fan policy as I think blanket policies are not good for Kansas," Diederich said. "We have districts of so many sizes and local decision making is best. Districts know what they can and cannot handle. Hopefully we can convince KSHSAA to loosen the policy to allow for 1-2 immediate family members, but for now just be happy

with the fact that they are playing at all.”

KSHSAA proposes delay for winter sports



The 2020-21 winter sports season in Kansas could be delayed or reduced depending on the vote at the Nov. 24 Kansas State High School Activities Association Board of Directors meeting

During the KSHSAA Executive Board meeting Wednesday the board reviewed data on the impact of COVID-19 on activity programs around the state due to the rising number of positive cases and impact on the health care system.

The board unanimously approved a proposal from the KSHSAA staff to suspend competitions until Jan. 15, 2021 and extend the winter moratorium. That proposal is now in front of the KSHSAA Board of Directors, who will vote on the issue at 1 p.m. on Nov. 24. The board of directors has members from every league across the state.

One of those board of directors, Paola High School principal Jeff Hines, was caught off-guard by the news.

“I consider myself pretty up to date when it comes to issues with KSHSAA, but I had no idea this was happening yesterday,” Hines said. “I was in an administrator meeting that started at

10 a.m. and at 10:01 I received an email from KSHSAA with the executive board agenda for a meeting that had already started. This is a pretty important issue and I wanted to speak at the board meeting, but was told I couldn't because the meeting had already started.

"I asked someone at KSHSAA why the agenda was posted sooner, and they said it was posted last week. I have searched the internet and I couldn't find it. I have no doubt that they did post somewhere, but they need to make it more accessible so there can be more discussion on the issue. I was surprised the issue came up."

The proposal which will be put up for a vote is as follows:

- Delay competitions for all winter activities until Friday, January 15.
- Allow virtual competition only in Debate and Scholars Bowl.
- Winter activity practice may continue where appropriate to do so through December 22. All KSHSAA risk mitigation protocols strictly enforced.
- Extend Winter Moratorium. Dec. 23 – Jan. 3; practices to resume Jan. 4; restrictions eliminate contact between coach/athlete/school and no school facility use.
- Tentative resumption of competition on January 15.
- No fans for competition, January 15-28.
- Limited fans Jan. 29 through remainder of winter competitions.
- Mandatory universal masking with exception to athletes in competition and officials during live action.
- No invitational tournaments.

High School Competition Limits:

- Basketball maximum 13 games per team.
- Bowling maximum 8 days per team/individual.
- Swimming and Diving maximum 6 competitions per athlete.
- Wrestling maximum 12 events, 20 competition point max.

Middle School Restrictions:

- No competition in December, practice only.
- No competition Jan. 1 – Jan. 14
- No events with more than three schools participating.
- Strongly encourage skill development.
- Strongly encourage intramural play only.
- Limit two fans per player starting Jan. 15.

As far as how the board of directors will vote on the issue, Hines isn't quite sure how it will go, but he doesn't believe the executive board was trying to sneak the issue past anyone.

"You can have two thoughts on the issue," Hines said. "One, all of the executive board members think delaying winter sports is a great idea. That is an option, I guess. Or two, all of the members thought this issue was too big for them to decide on and wanted to make sure to get input from all its members and allowing them to make that decision. I tend to think that is what they are doing here.

"Will there be some people that vote yes to delay sports? Yeah I think there will be, just because of the situation their districts are in, but I tend to think a majority of them will vote no. Just as far as how I will be voting, I will vote no because I think that each school board should be able to decide whether or not to have winter sports. They know their district better than anyone. That is what we did for the fall

and I believe the same thing should happen here.”

Louisburg wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird understands the concern with the rising number of COVID-19 cases across the state, but he knows there will also be an impact on the student athletes if these activities are delayed.

“I totally understand why KSHSAA is considering taking action, but it worries me because a delay in starting competition could put us on the path to canceling the winter season altogether,” Bovaird said. “There have been wrestling tournaments happening across the nation since mid-July, and there have been very few cases traced back to the tournaments themselves. Coaches, wrestlers, officials, and tournament directors are taking precautions, and I hope that we’re able to continue doing what they’ve been doing.

“I’m afraid that a reduction in the number of competitions allowed would only further harm the kids in the sport. I get it, though. Covid-19 is real and we’re constantly reacting to it and rethinking how we can best protect our kids’ health. While we may be protecting kids and their families from the potential of infection, we would also be taking away opportunities where kids can learn invaluable lessons and come together as a team to bond in ways that you can’t get through the classroom, and we would be doing some considerable harm to their mental health.”

KSHSAA’s decision to potentially delay winter sports came on the same day Gov. Laura Kelly issued a new executive order on face masks after Kansas reported more than 5,800 new cases of COVID-19 on Monday.

Since the news broke, Hines has been hearing from people all over the area, who are voicing their concerns.

“There are a lot of people who are worried that their kids’ season might not happen, and I get that, but I would say that people need to temper their venom at the state association,”

Hines said. "I think it's is great that people are contacting their board of directors and letting people know their feelings, and we want to hear from those who are concerned. At the end of the day, I believe they will do the right thing for these kids."

As for Louisburg High School itself, administrators will be ready to implement any rules necessary as they hope the students get to play a full season.

"My reaction was to the kids and coaches it would affect who look forward to sports and saw their peers and themselves play in the fall with accommodations, only to be potentially denied their opportunity for a full season," Louisburg activities director Michael Pickman said. "I understand the reasoning of the KSHSAA board, but I also understand the views of those who don't want to see any changes. Luckily it is in the discussion phase and perhaps they will find a way for the kids to play while implementing some guidelines for keeping it safe, such as no fans.

"Whether Dec. 4 or Jan. 15 as proposed for starting competitions, we are still going to work to make it a safe environment for all and to limit risk. I am not in the medical field, so I won't pretend to know if the delay will help lower the numbers. If it passes, then I hope that it does. Still, we won't have a cure and will have the same need to implement safety protocol Jan. 15 as we would Dec. 4."

"I want our students to have the opportunity to play and play safely, so my main concern right now is that the policies the district and athletic department have put in place are well thought out and followed," Pickman added. "I think if we commit to following safety practices, we can still slow the spread regardless of the results of next week's discussion and decisions by the KSHSAA board."