

# Hot-shooting Ottawa sinks Louisburg



Louisburg junior Sam Guetterman rises up for a shot in the lane during Tuesday's home contest against Ottawa. The Wildcats couldn't keep up with Ottawa in the 65-50 loss as the Cyclones connected on 11 3-pointers.

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Life in the Frontier League can be difficult at times, just ask the Louisburg boys basketball team.

The Wildcats faced one of the tougher teams in the league Tuesday when they hosted Ottawa, and despite staying with the Cyclones for a half, Louisburg couldn't hold on in a 65-50 loss.

It was the second straight loss for Louisburg, which also fell to a talented Eudora squad right before the holiday break.

"It has to be one of the best leagues in any division in Kansas," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "Hopefully it will push us to work harder, and help them realize that there are good teams in this league, but we can be too. I think there is a fine line between a good team and a decent team. We are right there, we just have to cross that line. It is putting together 32 minutes."

Louisburg (3-3) showed signs of crossing that line at

different parts of the game, especially in the third quarter. The Wildcats trailed by 11 points at halftime, but rallied to cut the Ottawa lead to six points midway through the third, before the Cyclones caught fire.

Ottawa, which connected on 11 3-pointers for the game, hit six in the third to balloon its lead to 22 points going into the final quarter.

“Defensively I thought we played really well,” Nelson said. “We have been emphasizing limiting offensive rebounds in practice and I think we did a good job fixing that. We were good defensively, but some of those shots they hit, there wasn’t much we could do.”

Ottawa forward Isaac McCullough hit six of the 3-pointers for Ottawa and finished with a game-high 26 points. Cyclone guard Perry Carroll was also difficult to stop on the perimeter as he added 21 points, including four 3-pointers.

The Wildcats got off to a slow start and fell behind 13-3 in the first quarter, but they fought back to cut into the Ottawa lead. Louisburg went on a 7-1 run to end the quarter after baskets from Grant Harding and Jayce Geiman.



**Sophomore Dalton Ribordy gets ready to drive the lane Tuesday against Ottawa.**

Geiman then forced a turnover, which led to a basket from Jacob Welsh and the Wildcats trailed just 14-10.

Cyclones answered right back in the second quarter as they went on a 14-4 run to push their lead back to double digits.

“Our post defense was fantastic for the most part and gave up very few points,” Nelson said. “We knew they were going to be quick, and after the first quarter, for whatever reason our help defense just wasn’t there and they go on an (14-4) run. Once our help defense got better, the game evened up.”

Harding and Welsh were both bright spots throughout the game. Harding finished with a team-high 17 points and Welsh also scored in double figures with 11. Sophomore Dalton Ribordy led the Wildcats with five rebounds.

Louisburg came out strong to start the second half as it went on an 8-3 run after two baskets from Mitchell McLellan and four free throws from Harding. However, Ottawa would catch fire from behind-the-arch as they connected on those six 3-pointers – many of which were well defended.

The Wildcats didn’t give in as they cut the 22-point lead to 13 late in the fourth quarter thanks to a pair of buckets from T.J. Dover and a 3-pointer from Sam Guetterman.

“That is the intensity we are trying to get to and that is something I need to get better at,” Nelson said. “That intensity in the fourth quarter is the same intensity we have to have the entire game. Everyone knows that is what they need to do, it is just me getting them to the point where they are that way from minute one to minute 32. No one works harder than our kids, it is just putting all these pieces of the puzzle together and figuring it out.”

Louisburg will try to snap its losing skid Friday when it travels to Baldwin. The Wildcats will be on the road the rest of this month and won’t return home until their game against

Paola on Feb. 2.

|           |         |    |    |
|-----------|---------|----|----|
| LOUISBURG |         | 10 | 13 |
| 12        | 15 – 50 |    |    |
| OTTAWA    |         | 14 | 18 |
| 23        | 10 – 65 |    |    |

LOUISBURG (3-3): Grant Harding 6-17 5-8 17; Jacob Welsh 4-5 3-4 11; T.J. Dover 2-6 1-2 5; ; Mitchell McLellan 2-7 0-0 4; Ben Minster 1-1 2-2 4; Dalton Ribordy 2-3 0-0 4; Sam Guetterman 1-5 0-0 3; Jayce Geiman 1-3 0-0 2. Totals: 19-47 15-20 50. 3-point field goals: 1, (Guetterman)

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## Eudora too much for Louisburg boys



Louisburg junior Jayce Geiman tries to dribble around a Eudora defender Tuesday during the Wildcats' Frontier League opener in Eudora. The Wildcats fell to Eudora 57-25 to move their record to 3-2 on the season.

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EUDORA – In what was a joyous locker room a few days earlier, the mood for the Louisburg boys basketball team was the complete opposite following Tuesday's league opening contest against Eudora.

The Wildcats traveled to Eudora on Tuesday to face off with the Cardinals just days after winning the Bulldog-Wildcat Classic. Louisburg seemed to have the momentum going in, but it was Eudora who had the upper-hand from start to finish.

Eudora scored 20 points in the first and second quarters and shut down the Wildcats' offense in the 57-25 win over Louisburg. It marks just the second loss of the season for the Wildcats as they now take some time off for the holiday break.

It was hard for the Wildcats to get much going offensively as the longer, athletic Cardinals made it difficult. Eudora forced 10 first quarter turnovers, many of which turned into baskets on the other end.

The game was tied at 3-all after Louisburg junior Grant Harding completed a three-point play, but Eudora took off after that and went on a 17-1 run to take a 20-4 lead into the second quarter.

It also didn't help the Wildcats that the Cardinals also caught fire from the field, including forward Brian Tolefree. The Eudora senior was 6-for-6 from the 3-point line in the first half and had 18 points at halftime.

The rest of the Cardinals were right behind him as they shot nearly 50 percent from the field for the game.

Harding led the Wildcats in scoring with eight points on the night and Ben Minster was next with four points.

The Wildcats will try and get back on the winning track on Jan. 5 when they host Ottawa. Tipoff is set for approximately 7:30 p.m.

|           |         |    |
|-----------|---------|----|
| LOUISBURG | 4       | 6  |
| 4         | 11 – 25 |    |
| EUDORA    | 20      | 20 |
| 11        | 6 – 57  |    |

LOUISBURG (3-2): Grant Harding 3-8 2-6 8; Ben Minster 2-4 0-0 4; Alex Dunn 1-1 1-2 3; Jacob Welsh 0-1 3-4 3; Jayce Geiman 1-6 0-0 2; Korbin Hankinson 1-2 0-0 2; Dalton Ribordy 1-1 0-0 2; T.J. Dover 0-3 1-4 1. Totals: 9-29 7-18 25.

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## Wildcats respond to win tournament crown



The Louisburg boys basketball team raises the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic first place trophy into the air following Friday's 69-52 victory over Baldwin in the championship game. The Wildcats won two straight games to win the tournament.

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As Mitchell McLellan gazed on the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic championship plaque following Friday's 69-52 victory over Baldwin, it was like hitting the jackpot.

For McLellan, and several other Louisburg basketball players, it was their first opportunity to actually hold a first place trophy. The Wildcats have gone through several lean years lately when it comes to wins, but they are off to a good start this year.

For the first time since 2012, the Wildcats won the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic championship and they had to earn it. After losing their first game of the tournament to Iola, which was held at Louisburg High School, the Wildcats battled back to win their next two games by an average of 17 points and were crowned champions.

“I couldn’t be more pleased,” Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. “To think about where we were after the Iola loss and to learn what we learned from that was the big thing. We learned our lesson. These boys want it and are intelligent enough to understand what they needed to.

“They were fantastic these last two games.”

It concluded with a strong 17-point victory over Frontier League foe Baldwin in the championship game as Louisburg got a team-high 22 points from McLellan, who scored 16 of those points in the first half.



**Louisburg junior T.J. Dover fights through two Baldwin defenders for a shot Friday during the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic.**

Louisburg jumped out to a 20-11 lead at the end of the first quarter and never looked back as it pressured the Bulldogs defensively and contested most of their shots. The Wildcats held Baldwin to just 32 percent from the field.

Offensively, Louisburg was just the opposite as it shot 53 percent from the field, with many of those opportunities coming from around the basket.

"We were just ready from the opening tipoff," McLellan said. "We caught fire and we did a good job of running the court and pressing the ball. We never settled to their game, we wanted them to play our game and that is what happened. We were able to feed the ball inside and we took advantage of a lot of those close shots that we couldn't make (against Iola)."

McLellan had a big night for Louisburg. Along with game-high 22 points, he also finished with 10 rebounds to record his first double-double of the season. Five of those rebounds came on the offensive end that led to several put backs.

"He is so important for us," Nelson said of McLellan. "He finds that weak side, and as soon as the help slides over to the strong side, he is so good at sliding underneath and getting those easy buckets and it was fantastic to see."

The Wildcats (3-1) also got double digit performances from juniors T.J. Dover and Grant Harding. Dover finished with 15 points and seven rebounds, many of which came the second half. Harding added 14 points and eight rebounds in the victory.

"Everyone is on a mission to win," McLellan said. "Our program



has had losing seasons every year for a very long time and we are all just tired of losing. We have that desire to win every time we step on the court.

“We took smart shots. We didn’t have to force anything and we got the looks we wanted to get most of the night, which were easy short shots and we didn’t settle.”

To get to the championship game, not only did the Wildcats have to beat its final opponent in pool play, Burlington, but they had to do so convincingly. Since Louisburg opened tournament play on Dec. 8 with a loss to Iola, the Wildcats had to do defeat Burlington by at least 13 points to advance to the title game.

Louisburg left a little cushion on that number.

The Wildcats jumped on Burlington from the start and never let up in their 71-53 victory. Like in its championship game win, Louisburg put a 20 spot on the board in the first quarter and held a 20-8 advantage into the second.

“Eliminating turnovers and attacking the rim is what was key for us,” Nelson said. “We know that we have guys that can shoot, but why shoot a low percentage 3-pointer when we can attack the rim and exploit matchups. Our boys may not be the biggest, but there is always mismatches somewhere and it is their job to find those and exploit them and that is what we did.”



The Louisburg boys basketball team poses with its championship trophy following Friday's win over Baldwin. Members of the team are (front row, from left) Korbin Hankinson, Mitchell McLellan, Grant Harding, Jacob Welsh, Alex Dunn; (back row) Dalton Ribordy, Jayce Geiman, Sam Guetterman, Ben Brummel, T.J. Dover, Ben Minster and Jake Hill.

Louisburg definitely found one as Burlington had a hard time containing Harding. The Wildcats forward exploded for a game-high 28 points and seven rebounds and Burlington didn't have an answer.

Harding also connected on four 3-pointers along with driving to the basket and getting to the free-throw line. The Louisburg junior was 8 for 8 from the line.

After Harding, the Wildcats had balanced scoring across the board. Dover finished in double figures with 10 points, while juniors Sam Guetterman, Jayce Geiman and McLellan each added eight points.

It was a big relief for Louisburg following its 54-46 loss to Iola two nights before. The Wildcats struggled offensively and trailed 24-18 at halftime.

Louisburg seemed to get some momentum back in the third quarter and even held a 36-32 lead into the fourth quarter. However, Iola outscored the Wildcats 22-10 in the final frame to get the upset.

Harding and McLellan each scored 13 points in the loss.

Louisburg will go for its first official Frontier League victory tomorrow when it travels to Eudora and hopes to get a win in its final game before the holiday break.

"The Frontier League is tough and we have to go out on a mission to win," McLellan said. "We have to come out ready to play every night, and even if we don't win, we can't hang our heads and let it carry over. This league is no joke and every game is going to be tough."

|                  |                |           |           |
|------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>BALDWIN</b>   |                | <b>11</b> | <b>16</b> |
| <b>14</b>        | <b>11 – 52</b> |           |           |
| <b>LOUISBURG</b> |                | <b>20</b> | <b>18</b> |
| <b>14</b>        | <b>17 – 69</b> |           |           |

LOUISBURG (3-1): Mitchell McLellan 11-18 0-2 22; T.J. Dover 7-11 1-2 15; Grant Harding 5-8 4-4 14; Jayce Geiman 3-6 0-0 8; Sam Guetterman 2-2 1-1 5; Jacob Welsh 1-3 2-7 4; Dalton Ribordy 0-2 1-2 1. Totals: 29-55 9-20 69. 3-point field goals: 2, (Geiman 2).

|                   |                |           |           |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>BURLINGTON</b> | <b>8</b>       | <b>15</b> | <b>14</b> |
| <b>16 – 53</b>    |                |           |           |
| <b>LOUISBURG</b>  |                | <b>20</b> | <b>17</b> |
| <b>18</b>         | <b>16 – 71</b> |           |           |

LOUISBURG: Grant Harding 8-14 8-10 28; T.J. Dover 5-10 0-0 10; Sam Guetterman 4-4 0-0 8; Jayce Geiman 1-6 6-9 8; Mitchell McLellan 4-8 0-0 8; Dalton Ribordy 1-2 4-4 6; Alex Dunn 2-2 0-0 4; Jacob Welsh 0-0 2-2 2. Totals: 25-48 20-25 71. 3-point field goals: 4, (Harding 4).

IOLA 10 14  
8 22 – 54

LOUISBURG 5 13  
18 10 – 46

LOUISBURG: Mitchell McLellan 6-11 1-3 13; Grant Harding 5-16 3-7 13; T.J. Dover 2-5 2-7 6; Dalton Ribordy 2-4 0-0 4; Ben Minster 1-2 1-1 3; Jacob Welsh 0-1 3-4 3; Sam Guetterman 1-4 0-0 2; Alex Dunn 1-3 0-0 2. Totals: 18-49 10-22 46.

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## Wildcats win thriller against Pittsburg



Louisburg junior Grant Harding dunks the ball after a steal during Friday's season opener against Pittsburg in Louisburg. The Wildcats rallied from seven points down with under three minutes left to pull off a 51-50 victory.

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It may have been just the season opener, but the Louisburg boys basketball team provided all the drama any fan could ask for.

There were rallies, dunks, floor burns, big defensive stops and enormous free throws all played in front of an electric crowd Friday inside the LHS gymnasium. When all was said and done, it was the Wildcats that were left standing.

Louisburg rallied from seven points down with under three minutes left in the game to outduel Pittsburg 51-50 and provided the Wildcats with a positive start to the season.

"I love these kids so much," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "When we were down we didn't get discouraged and they all stuck together. They don't care who is on the court, they just play well together. This is a team and these kids are close and that is what makes this a special group. The effort was there the whole time and that was fantastic."

Except for the opening minutes of the game, the Wildcats found themselves behind most of the way, until they took the lead for good with a minute left in the contest. Louisburg trailed 48-41 with 2 minutes and 41 seconds remaining, then went on a 10-0 run to end the game.

The game seemed to turn the Wildcats' way when they got baskets on back-to-back steals with under two minutes left. The first one came thanks to junior Sam Guetterman and then fellow junior Grant Harding stole the ball and drove it down the floor for an uncontested dunk to cut the Pittsburg lead to just one.

Senior Mitchell McLellan came through for the Wildcats after that with a basket with 1:10 remaining, then after a Pittsburg missed free throw, calmly hit two free throws himself with 28 seconds left. It would be all the Wildcats would need.



**Mitchell McLellan puts up a shot Friday against Pittsburg. The Louisburg senior scored the final four points to help the Wildcats get the win.**

"Grant was outstanding and Mitchell was outstanding," Nelson said. "Mitchell will be the first one to tell you that he didn't have his best game, but when the time mattered he was there."

Louisburg (1-0) got production from up and down its bench throughout the contest.

Junior T.J. Dover led the Wildcats in scoring with 12 points as he was 6 for 9 from the field. McLellan was also in double digits with 10 points.

Harding was all over the floor for the Wildcats with nine points, including a pair of dunks, to go along with nine rebounds, five assists and three steals. Senior point guard Jacob Welsh ended with six points, two assists and two steals, while sophomore forward Dalton Ribordy had five points in his first varsity game.

"Welsh was outstanding," Nelson said. "Dalton, for his first varsity game, I really thought his defense was fantastic in the paint. Jayce (Geiman) hit a big 3-pointer down the stretch too, so a lot of guys contributed for us. We have a lot more options this season and we can go 9 to 10 players deep, while last season we could go seven or maybe eight, on a good night."

The first quarter wasn't the start Louisburg was hoping for. While they scored 14 points in the opening frame, the Wildcats gave up 23 points to Pittsburg and weren't able to get many stops on the defensive end.

After that, Louisburg clamped down on the Purple Dragons defensively and the Wildcats found themselves on the floor for countless loose balls and seemed to frustrate Pittsburg, especially in the second and fourth quarters.

The Wildcats held Pittsburg to just 27 points in the final three quarters, including just five points in the second and fourth quarters.

"Pitt can pose a lot of matchup problems," Nelson said. "They are athletic, super quick and they are a handful. The problem in the first quarter was we gave up 23 points. One of the kids' goals before the season was to hold teams to 56 points a game and we give up 23 in the first quarter.

"They knew they made some young mistakes that they shouldn't have made and came out after that and only gave up 27 points in the next three quarters. A lot of it just comes with the maturation process and having each other's back, which they clearly did."

The Wildcats return to action tonight as they host the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic all week. Louisburg will matchup with Iola at approximately 6:30 p.m. tonight and then will play Burlington at the same time Thursday.

|      |    |   |    |     |
|------|----|---|----|-----|
| PITT | 23 | 5 | 17 | 5 – |
| 50   |    |   |    |     |

|     |    |   |    |      |
|-----|----|---|----|------|
| LOU | 14 | 9 | 13 | 15 – |
| 51  |    |   |    |      |

LOUISBURG (1-0): T.J. Dover 6-9 0-0 12; Mitchell McLellan 4-9 2-2 10; Grant Harding 4-13 1-2 9; Jacob Welsh 3-6 0-1 6; Dalton Ribordy 1-3 3-4 5; Ben Minster 2-2 0-0 4; Jayce Geiman 1-5 0-0 3; Sam Guetterman 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 22-48 6-9 51. 3-point field goals: 1, (Geiman)

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## Wildcats ready to take step forward



Junior Grant Harding (right) is one of the top returning players for the Louisburg boys basketball team this season. Harding was an honorable mention all-league player last season as he nearly averaged a double-double.

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It may not have been the most ideal situation for Louisburg boys basketball coach Jason Nelson last year.

The Wildcats had just three seniors, didn't have much height and had to throw a group of inexperienced sophomores into the fire of varsity action. As it turned out, the Wildcats got better as the season went on despite only finishing the season with six wins.

Now, Louisburg is hoping to take an even bigger step forward this season.

Those group of sophomores are now juniors and features a senior class that has some veteran experience and a couple newcomers as well.

"Every junior has had some sort of varsity experience and that is huge," Nelson said. "There won't be a transition period and they'll know the difference in speed, aggression and tempo between junior varsity and varsity from the beginning."

Seniors Mitchell McLellan and Jacob Welsh return to the guard spot and will lead the Wildcats, while Alex Dunn and Ben Brummel are new to the team this year. McLellan, who missed half of the season last year with a leg injury, will be one of the team's outside scoring threats.

Welsh, on the other hand, will take over the point guard duties from Corbin Wertz, an all-league player from a season ago.

"Jacob will be our point and has done a superb job of preparing for the season," Nelson said. "Mitchell is an example of why I love my job. He's always had the ability to do well, but has grown into a leader capable of rallying those around him. He's going to have a good year.

"Alex will help us around the perimeter and brings a quality aggression that is contagious. Ben hasn't played in high

school, but is a talented young man who will fill in when needed and is a fantastic teammate.”



**Jacob Welsh will be relied on to run the offense this season for Louisburg.**

Despite that senior leadership, the Wildcats will also look to get a lot of production out of an underclassmen. Junior Grant Harding emerged as one of Louisburg’s top players a season ago, as he has the ability to play on the wing or inside.

Harding, who was an honorable mention all-league selection last season, averaged nearly a double-double with 11 points and nine rebounds a contest.

“Getting all-league honorable mention in the Frontier League is quite a statement, let alone for a sophomore and Grant has embraced the role of emotional leader and worked hard to improve his overall game,” Nelson said. “Grant is a special talent with the ability to make those around him better while excelling himself and he’s ready for the constant challenges this brings.”

Harding, McLellan and Welsh are slated to start for the Wildcats with several others in the mix to fill the final two spots. Junior guard Jayce Geiman will look to give the

Wildcats some scoring punch from the outside and fellow junior Sam Guetterman will back up Welsh at the point guard spot.

Junior T.J. Dover and sophomore Dalton Ribordy will also see a lot of minutes at the forward spot.

"Jayce has worked as hard as any player I've seen at improving his all-around game," Nelson said. "He's always been a good spot shooter, but he's now one of our better defenders, ball handlers and has added an element of attacking the rim that has made him a good all-around player.

"Sammy is also ready to step in at the point guard or off-guard spot. T.J. learned a great deal last year about being a post in the Frontier League and is ready to take the reins in that position. Dalton is just a sophomore, but will most definitely be counted on at times and is ready for some varsity experience."

The Wildcats open their season at 7:30 p.m. Friday when they host Pittsburg. Louisburg will also the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic next week with games on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Louisburg will also host the substate tournament this season and will be paired with Spring Hill, Paola and Fort Scott.

To start the season, however, Nelson likes what he has seen so far out of his group and is excited for what the season holds.

"Couldn't have asked for a better beginning for the first couple of weeks," Nelson said. "Every single player has been eager to learn, competitive and willing to push themselves both physically and mentally. Probably the most enjoyable part for me has been watching them push each other in practice. They're truly dedicated to making each other better through competition and at the conclusion of the competition, they understand that they're teammates with a common goal.

"Being a true believer in transparency, our players all know

where they stand with their coaching staff and have a good idea of their roles in our program.”

## 2015-16 LOUISBURG BOYS BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

Dec. 4  
Pittsburg  
7:30 p.m.

Dec. 8 Iola (Wildcat Bulldog  
Classic) 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 10 Burlington (Wildcat-Bulldog  
Classic) 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 11 Wildcat-Bulldog  
Classic TBA

Dec. 15 at  
Eudora  
7:30 p.m.

Jan. 5  
Ottawa  
7:30 p.m.

Jan. 8 at  
Baldwin  
7:30 p.m.

Jan. 12 at  
Frontenac  
7:30 p.m.

Jan. 15 at De  
Soto  
7:30 p.m.

|              |           |            |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Jan. 19      |           | at Baldwin |
| Invitational | TBA       |            |
| Jan. 22      |           | at Baldwin |
| Invitational | TBA       |            |
| Jan. 23      |           | at Baldwin |
| Invitational | TBA       |            |
| Jan. 28      |           | at Spring  |
| Hill         |           | 7:30       |
| p.m.         |           |            |
| Feb. 2       |           |            |
| Paola        |           |            |
|              | 7:30 p.m. |            |
| Feb. 5       |           |            |
| Eudora       |           |            |
|              | 7:30 p.m. |            |
| Feb. 12      |           | at         |
| Ottawa       |           |            |
| 7:30 p.m.    |           |            |
| Feb. 16      |           |            |
| Baldwin      |           |            |
|              | 7:30 p.m. |            |
| Feb. 19      |           | Spring     |
| Hill         |           |            |
| 7:30 p.m.    |           |            |
| Feb. 23      |           | De         |
| Soto         |           |            |
|              | 7:30 p.m. |            |
| Feb. 26      | at Paola  |            |
|              | 7:30 p.m. |            |

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# Opinion: Rough patch leads to new beginning



I am just going to come right out and say it, "I'm scared."

Yeah, it is an unusual way to start out an opinion piece, but there is no two ways around it – I am petrified. But believe it or not, it is what keeps me going.

We have all had at least one point in our existence where our lives changed for better or worse. I have had more than a few of those in my life, but the latest one came on Jan. 9.

It started out like all the other Fridays over the last seven years. I reported to work, spent a few hours in the office getting ready for what was a busy weekend of prep coverage ahead. It was the first action after Christmas break and I was ready to get back into the swing of things.

That never took place.

My bosses came into my office early that afternoon to inform me I was being let go. The job of covering Louisburg athletics was no longer mine. I packed up my things, turned in my key, went home, punched the wall a couple times and cried.

I was scared.

After all the tears came the questions. How was I going to

support my family? What am I going to do for a job? The list went on and on and I couldn't come up with many answers.

As it turned out, one of the worst experiences of my life turned into one of the best.

Thanks to a lot of prayers, and support from family and friends, I decided to start Louisburg Sports Zone. Yep, that's right, I went from being unemployed to starting my own business for the first time in my life.

Not exactly the best way to alleviate fears.

However, when I kicked off the site just a month later, I was overwhelmed with the amount of support from students at Louisburg High School, employees throughout the district, parents and several others who offered encouragement and supported my new venture.

I finished the last half of the winter season and all of the spring doing what I took for granted the previous seven years. I got the chance to cover Louisburg athletics again.

You know, this whole starting your own business thing might not have been a bad idea after all. I would have never had the courage to go out on my own had I not been pushed in that direction.

Fast forward to the present and I am still alive and kicking, ready to start my eighth season of roaming the Wildcat sidelines with camera in hand, waiting to tell that next story.

This fall brings a lot of story lines to the Wildcat programs. The football team is looking to improve off its 3-win season a year ago and find its way back to the playoffs with a veteran group returning.

Volleyball is primed and ready to make its fourth consecutive state tournament this year after placing in the top four in

the last three years. The Lady Cats return five seniors that have a lot of state experience and that bodes well for another trip to Salina.

The Wildcat soccer team returns an experienced group from a year ago as they try to crack the top of the Frontier League standings. The cross country team also has several returning runners who will try and qualify for the state meet.

There is a lot to be excited about when it comes to Louisburg sports, but for me personally, I am just fortunate enough to still be a part of it in a small way.

I take a lot of pride in what I do and I hope that it shows when you read stories or look at pictures on this site. I started this business knowing that I will never be rich, but it gives me an opportunity to continue to do what I love.

Thanks to all those who have supported me and for the more than 23,000 views on the site in the last six months. I have said it before, but I am extremely blessed to live in a community that supports each other through good times and bad.

Every day I am fortunate enough to be able to go to work and support my family doing what I know how to do. That is all I have ever wanted, so thank you Louisburg for allowing me to do it.

I am still scared, though.

It is that fear that drives me to do the best I can in what I do in my job and in life. I don't want what happened on that day in January to happen again and I will do everything to make sure it doesn't.

Right now I am living the good life. I have the opportunity to work for myself, support my family and do what I enjoy. I can't ask for any more.

I am living the American dream.



I just don't want to wake up.

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# Wildcats looking for leadership, identity



Louisburg's Sam Guetterman (right) and Alex Seuferling battle for a loose ball during a team scrimmage Thursday at Louisburg High School. The Wildcat basketball team concluded their week-long team camp Friday and will continue workouts throughout the summer.

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It was never easy for Louisburg boys basketball coach Jason Nelson or his team last season.

The Wildcats had six wins a season ago and dealt with injury problems most of the way. Those injuries forced younger players to play roles on the varsity level before they were ready and it all trickled down.

However, the Wildcats hope going through those rough times will pay off in a big way for this coming year. Louisburg went to work last week and held its annual team camp at the high school as they prepare for what could be an exciting season.

Louisburg will do so with two new coaches in the fold. Kyle Conley and Jason Friesen take over as assistants in the program and replace former coaches Kyle Wright and Brian Keegan who resigned their spots.

“Camp was fantastic,” Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. “We saw the evolution of our leaders and the beginning of our identity as a group. It further served as a great introduction for our new staff members for our group. We gain a great deal of knowledge and experience with our new assistant coaches and we couldn’t be more excited.”

Along with two new coaches, the Wildcats are also in the process of finding new leaders. Last season’s core of Corbin Wertz, Brady Lambeth and Nathan Moore graduated and Nelson is looking to this year’s junior class, along with seniors Mitchell McLellan and Alex Dunn to provide that departed leadership.



**Louisburg boys basketball coach Jason Nelson looks on during the Wildcats’ week-long camp Thursday at the high school.**

According to Nelson, juniors Grant Harding, Sam Guetterman and T.J. Dover are among the others who are looking to lead what

is still a young team. In fact, Nelson is looking to Harding to lead the team on and off the floor this season.

Harding was an honorable mention all-Frontier League player a season ago and is the team's top returning scorer. Harding averaged 11.1 points a game to go along with nine rebounds. He also averaged one block a contest.

"When Grant was a freshmen, we saw the potential in him," Nelson said. "When he was a sophomore, we slowly integrated him into our plans so as to allow for a slow, steady evolution. As a junior, he's ready to both lead by example and word."

The Wildcats are putting in a lot of work in the offseason. Along with their team camp, they have workouts twice a week, weights twice a week and participate in a summer league at Rockhurst University to compete against several Kansas City area high school teams.

Nelson has already seen a growth from his team in summer league action, with a lot of it coming from his junior group.

"The junior class will most definitely reap the benefits of the experience they gained last year," Nelson said. "The Frontier League is not conducive to a 'trial by fire' mentality, but all of our injuries from last year forced our hand. While it was wrought with difficulties, our then sophomores did a fantastic job overall and have the knowledge to step up without suffering from learning on the go."

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# Wildcats honored at postseason banquet



Louisburg seniors (from left) Nathan Moore, Corbin Wertz and Brady Lambeth were honored, along with the rest of their teammates, during the Wildcats' postseason basketball banquet Thursday at Louisburg High School.

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It wasn't an easy time for the Louisburg boys basketball team this season, but that didn't mean the Wildcats didn't have their successes and good memories.

Those were all shared Thursday during the team's annual postseason banquet at Louisburg High School. Louisburg finished with a 6-15 record on the season, but head coach Jason Nelson knew his team was better than its overall mark.

"I think there was probably six games or so this year where we were leading in the fourth quarter and we ended up losing," Nelson said. "Whether it was injuries or whatever, we just couldn't win those games. As the year went on, we kept getting better and we won a couple of those games late in the year."

Nelson pointed to the fact that his team had to play with a lot of youth on his side as the varsity roster featured up to seven sophomores and only three seniors. Corbin Wertz, Brady Lambeth and Nathan Moore provided that senior leadership

throughout the season, while Wertz, the team's leading scorer, was out a few weeks with an injury and others had to pick up the slack.

However, Nelson knows his three seniors are key for his program, even though their Wildcat playing days are over.

"They displayed to this group of underclassmen what it takes to lead and the kind of character you need to have," Nelson said. "This senior group is so special to me and was one of the reasons I took the job a couple years ago. They did everything we asked of them and more. I will definitely miss them."

Two Wildcats were recognized for their postseason accolades on the all-Frontier League team

Wertz earned second team all-league honors while sophomore Grant Harding found his way on the team for the first time as he was awarded an honorable mention spot.

Wertz averaged 17.2 points a game to go along with 6.3 rebounds and four assists. Harding averaged 11.1 points a game to go along with nine rebounds. He also averaged one block.

Nelson also announced his varsity letterwinners for the season. The winners are:

**Seniors:** Corbin Wertz, Nathan Moore and Brady Lambeth

**Juniors:** Mitchell McLellan and Jacob Welsh

**Sophomores:** T.J. Dover, Jayce Geiman, Sam Guetterman, Korbin Hankinson, Grant Harding and Jake Hill

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# Wertz, Harding earn all-league honors



Louisburg senior Corbin Wertz was one of two Wildcats to be named to the all-Frontier League basketball team. Wertz earned second team honors after he averaged 17 points a game.

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The talent in the Frontier League for boys basketball was at its usual high caliber this season and Louisburg found itself in the mix of it all.

Louisburg put two players from its six-win team on the squad. Senior Corbin Wertz earned second team all-league honors while sophomore Grant Harding found his way on the team for the first time as he was awarded an honorable mention spot.

"I felt our team was well represented granted the adversity we had with injury and the quality nature of our league," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "Any coach would want more representation or kids placing higher than they do, but that's the nature of the job itself."

Injury might have been the only thing that kept Wertz off the first-team in his final season as a Wildcat. He missed several games with a hamstring injury, but he had first-team type numbers for Louisburg.

Wertz averaged 17.2 points a game to go along with 6.3

rebounds and four assists a contest in a tough league schedule.

“For Corbin to receive second team, despite missing four league games to injury, is a testament to his ability and the respect he’s earned among the coaches around the league,” Nelson said. “He leaves behind a legacy that all younger players will benefit from, be it next year, or four years down the road.”



Louisburg sophomore Grant Harding was recently selected to the all-Frontier League basketball team as an honorable mention.

With Wertz out for part of the season, it was up to several sophomores to pick up the scoring load and Harding took on the challenge. Harding nearly averaged a double-double in his first full season on the varsity level.

Harding averaged 11.1 points a game to go along with nine rebounds. He also averaged one block a contest.

“For Grant to be recognized despite being only a sophomore is a great honor for him,” Nelson said. “He progressed in the

manner his staff wanted throughout the year and deserved to be recognized.”

Underclassmen were littered all over the all-league team. The first team featured four underclassmen and one senior.

Eudora sophomore Mitchell Ballock headed the first team along with junior teammate Austin Downing. Paola junior Mason McDow, Ottawa sophomore Isaac McCullough and Ottawa senior Quentin Blaue rounded out the list.

Ottawa led the way with four all-league selections, while Eudora and Paola followed with three each.

## **2015 All-Frontier League Boys Basketball**

### **First team**

Austin Downing, Eudora, junior

Isaac McCullough, Ottawa, sophomore

Mason McDow, Paola, junior

Mitchell Ballock, Eudora, sophomore

Quentin Blaue, Ottawa, senior

### **Second team**

Christian Gaylord, Baldwin, senior

Corbin Wertz, Louisburg, senior

Danny Hodge, Spring Hill, senior

Ivan Hughes, Spring Hill, junior

Justin Criddle, Paola, junior



## **Honorable mention**

Alex Wilson, Paola, junior

Grant Harding, Louisburg, sophomore

Jake Matney, Ottawa, senior

Jomain Rouser, Eudora, junior

Nick Mullen, De Soto, senior

Tyler Smith, Ottawa, senior

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# **Louisburg can't hold off Fort Scott in loss**



Louisburg senior Corbin Wertz goes up for a basket Thursday during the semifinals of the Class 4A Division I substate tournament at Paola High School. The Wildcats fell 65-49 to Fort Scott.

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PAOLA — For one half anyway, the Louisburg boys basketball team went toe-to-toe with No. 1 seed Fort Scott.

The second half was a different story.

Fort Scott found its stroke and used a big third quarter to eliminate Louisburg 65-49 on Thursday in the Class 4A Division I substate semifinals at Paola High School. The Wildcats ended their season with a 6-15 record.

"We played as well as we've played all year in the first half," Louisburg coach Jason Nelson said. "We were hitting out shots, contesting theirs and limiting their second chance opportunities.

"In the second half, we weren't hitting our shots as well as we had in the first half, and they went on a little spurt where they hit three contested 3-pointers. To further complicate matters, we had a little foul trouble and consequently our rotation was a little off defensively which led to us not being as aggressive on the boards."

The two teams traded leads in the first half and Louisburg held a 20-18 advantage with under three minutes left in the second quarter. Fort Scott went on a mini 5-0 run before halftime to grab the lead back.

Louisburg senior Nathan Moore made it just a one-point halftime deficit when he hit a runner in the lane with five seconds left to give the Wildcats a little momentum.

Fort Scott didn't waste much time in the third quarter as it went on a 13-4 run to start and the Wildcats all of a sudden found themselves down double digits four minutes into the second half.

Sophomore Jayce Geiman came off the bench to hit two 3-pointers late in the third and Louisburg trailed by 12 points going into the final quarter. It was as close as the Wildcats would get.

Fort Scott defeated Paola in the championship game Saturday to

move on to the state tournament.

Senior Corbin Wertz led the Wildcats in scoring with 19 points and Moore, another senior, finished with eight. Wertz, Moore and senior Brady Lambeth all played their final game for the Wildcats.

“Corbin, Nathan and Brady exemplified this program for the two years I’ve been responsible for it,” Nelson said. “They worked to improve, imparted their knowledge on their younger teammates and always believed in the progress of our program. They will be missed tremendously but their legacy will be seen through the progress and effort of next years and the teams that follow.”

It was an up and down season for the Wildcats as they finished with six wins that could have turned into even more. However, Nelson saw a lot of progress from his team despite several obstacles put in its way.

“When the season started, if you’d have told anybody on our staff that we’d have a broken leg, broken toe and a severely pulled hamstring which led to six sophomores on our varsity roster we would have been mortified,” Nelson said. “Once this happened, it turned into one of the most enjoyable experiences of my professional career. We had a young roster that grew leaps and bounds by being forced into an adverse situation and through the frustration, the yelling from the coaches, and uncertainty, each and every one of them improved dramatically.”

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| <b>LOUISBURG</b>  | <b>14</b>      | <b>8</b> |
| <b>11</b>         | <b>16 – 49</b> |          |
| <b>FORT SCOTT</b> | <b>15</b>      | <b>8</b> |
| <b>22</b>         | <b>20 – 65</b> |          |

**LOUISBURG (6-15): Corbin Wertz 19; Nathan Moore 8; Grant Harding 7; Jayce Geiman 6; Brady Lambeth 5; T.J. Dover 2; Sam Guetterman 2. Totals: 20 6-8 49. 3-point field goals: 3, (Geiman 2, Lambeth)**