

# Lady Cats fall to back-to-back state-ranked teams



Louisburg junior Haley Cain puts up a shot in the lane Tuesday against Baldwin in the second round of the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic at Baldwin High School. The Lady Cats fell 62-31 to the Bulldogs, who are ranked No. 5 in the state.

BALDWIN CITY – Not even a full week into the season, the Louisburg High School girls basketball team wrapped up what might be its toughest two games of the year.

After getting a season opening victory Friday against Pittsburg, the Lady Cats opened the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic with back-to-back games against a pair of state-ranked opponents.

On Monday, Louisburg faced off with Burlington, which is the No. 4 team in Class 4A-DII and then had to meet Baldwin, the No. 5 squad in 4A-DII, the following day.

For a team with just one returning starter from a year ago, it was a tall task for the Lady Cats as they fell to Burlington, 76-46, and then lost to Baldwin, 62-31, on Tuesday. Despite the setbacks, Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry believes his team can learn from this experience.

“I think it’s very beneficial for our young team to play some of these top caliber teams early in the season as we are

learning and growing,” Lowry said “It provides a great platform to develop the type of toughness we want to play with. I am confident this group of girls will continue to improve throughout the season as they gain experience and confidence.”

Against Burlington, the Lady Cats got a big game from their two team captains. Junior Carson Buffington recorded her second straight double-double with 16 points and 10 rebounds, to go along with four steals.

Senior Isabelle Holtzen also scored in double figures with 10 points to go along with seven assists and six rebounds. Freshman Madilyn Melton scored nine points and had five rebounds, while senior Bailey Belcher pulled down six boards.

Despite that, the Lady Cats just couldn't slow down Burlington as it scored 45 first half points on its way to a 45-21 halftime advantage.

It was the same type of start Tuesday against Baldwin. The Bulldogs used pressure defense and 3-point shooting to take a 36-17 lead at halftime. Baldwin hit 10 3-pointers on the night to pull away from the Lady Cats.

“Burlington and Baldwin are very good teams that are well deserving of their current state rankings,” Lowry said. “Both teams returned some very talented players from last year and are well coached. We expected these to be very competitive games and I was proud of how our girls responded.”

Holtzen and Buffington once again led the Lady Cats on both ends of the floor. Holtzen responded with a team-high 11 points, while Buffington added nine points and a team-high 18 rebounds.

Sophomore Haley Cain was also a factor on the glass for Louisburg as she was second on the team with 10 rebounds.

“Through these first few games, Carson and Isabelle have been great leaders and unselfish in their play,” Lowry said. “Haley, Bailey and Carlee (Gassman) have and continue to gain valuable experience and are getting more confident with each outing. We have some younger players that are beginning to see they can compete at this level and how they can contribute to the team’s success”

Louisburg will try and end the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic with a win Friday when it travels back to Baldwin for a matchup with Anderson County. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m.

<b>LOU</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10 –</b>
<b>46</b>				
<b>BUR</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16 –</b>
<b>76</b>				

LOUISBURG (1-2): Carson Buffington 16, Isabelle Holtzen 10, Madilyn Melton 9, Carlee Gassman 5, Haley Cain 3, Bailey Belcher 2, Alyse Moore 1. Totals: 15-52 7-16 46. 3-point field goals: 3, (Buffington 2, Gassman)

<b>LOU</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>– 31</b>				
<b>BAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12 –</b>
<b>62</b>				

LOUISBURG: Isabelle Holtzen 11, Carson Buffington 9, Bailey Belcher 5, Haley Cain 4. Totals: 10-45 7-18 31. 3-point field goals: 4, (Holtzen 2, Buffington, Belcher)

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# Pittsburg spoils Louisburg's season opener



Louisburg senior guard Justin Sievert drives the lane on a Pittsburg defender Friday at Louisburg High School. Pittsburg defeated the Wildcats 76-48 in their season opener.

Starting off the season with just one returning starter from a state tournament team last year is difficult enough, but to do it against the No. 7 team in the state is even more challenging.

The Louisburg High School boys basketball team hosted No. 7 Pittsburg on Friday in its season opener and the Purple Dragons handed the Wildcats a 76-48 loss.

The defeat also spoiled the debut of Wildcat head coach Ty Pfannenstiel, who is in his first season with Louisburg.

"I was very impressed with them," Pfannenstiel said of Pittsburg. "I thought we battled hard early, got down and then fought back again which was good versus this team. Pittsburg just opened it up in the second half and they are relentless on the boards.

"They have some athletes out there, but our kids will learn

from this. We will watch film and to see how hard we are really playing. It isn't that we aren't trying to play hard, I just don't think they realize what it takes yet."

Louisburg faced adversity early as three starters picked up two fouls in the first quarter, including the team's lone returning starter in senior forward Dalton Ribordy. Junior point guard Brayden Gage and senior Ben Minster were also saddled with a pair of fouls, but Ribordy and Gage later picked up their third in the second quarter.



**Louisburg junior Dylan DeShazer goes up for an easy basket Friday. DeShazer led Louisburg in scoring with 16 points.**

The Wildcats were forced to go to their bench early and they were able to keep their team in the game in the first half.

"We did some good things out there," Pfannenstiel said. "We had some cold shooting and I don't think we expected three starters to get in foul trouble early. With Ribordy, I don't think that is what he was expecting from his first game and I think he was a little over aggressive. I liked his intensity, but he just needs to play a little smarter after getting the first foul early.

"We just have to learn and that will come. Pittsburg played with a different speed than what we have seen in practice and hopefully that will open their eyes."

Junior Dylan DeShazer came off the bench in place of Ribordy and had a big night with a team-high 16 points, including a pair of 3-pointers. DeShazer scored eight straight points in the second quarter to trim Pittsburg's lead to eight.

Senior Desmond Doles hit a pair of free throws to make the deficit just six, but Pittsburg ended the first half on a 10-0 run to go up 38-22 at halftime.

"Dylan did some good things and he can really shoot it," Pfannenstiel said. "He bodied up well, played good defense and grabbed some big rebounds. He is going to be a player for us and I was proud of the way we battled back. I don't think we understand the momentum we could have had if we could have kept building on that."

DeShazer was the lone Wildcat to score in double figures, but had some help as Minster finished the game with nine points, while Doles and fellow senior Justin Sievert each scored seven.

Louisburg will try and get back on track starting today as it travels to Baldwin High School for the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic. The Wildcats will face off with Burlington at 5:30 p.m. today and then will meet Baldwin at 7 p.m., tomorrow.

"This is the best way to get that taste out of your mouth is

to get right back on the court,” Pfannenstiel said. “We will see what kind of mistakes we can correct and we have to make sure we are ready to go.”

<b>LOU</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10 –</b>
<b>48</b>				
<b>PITT</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17 –</b>
<b>76</b>				

LOUISBURG (0-1): Dylan DeShazer 16, Ben Minster 9, Justin Sievert 7, Desmond Doles 7, Dalton Ribordy 3, Parker Perentis 3, Noah Hill 2, Kohl Vogel 1. 3-point field goals: 4, (DeShazer 2, Sievert, Perentis)

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## Lady Cats hold on to win season opener over Pittsburg



Louisburg junior Carson Buffington (right) and Isabelle Holtzen battle a Pittsburg player for a loose ball Friday in Louisburg during the Lady Cats’ season opener. Louisburg defeated Pittsburg 46-43.

In its first game after losing four starters from a year ago,

there were times where Louisburg High School girls basketball team looked like a seasoned club.

The Lady Cats jumped out to a double digit lead in the first half thanks to an offensive burst against Pittsburg on Friday in their season opener.

Then came the second half where both teams filled up the stat sheet with turnovers.

"I kept asking the official, 'This has to be the first game, right?'" Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said. "It was, and those are some things you expect from a young team first team out."

However, the Lady Cats accomplished something a lot of others didn't expect – a victory. Despite a late charge from the Class 5A school, Louisburg held on for a 46-43 win and got its season off on the right foot.

"It felt so good," junior Carson Buffington said. "I know there are a lot of people out there who are doubting us, but it felt so good to prove that we can do it and that we are actually a pretty good team."

Buffington, the team's lone returning starter, couldn't have asked for a better start to her season as she was three steals shy of a triple-double. She finished with a team-high 12 points and 13 rebounds to go along with seven steals.

Louisburg's other team captain, senior Isabelle Holtzen, rose to the occasion as well as she added seven points, six rebounds, four assists, two steals and two blocks.

As a team, the Lady Cats forced 25 turnovers that included 14 steals and four blocked shots. Defensively, Louisburg held Pittsburg to 28 points through three quarters.

"The defense did play well at times, but we have a lot of stuff to work on rotation wise," Lowry said. "Our veterans in Carson and Isabelle really stepped up at different times for



us and we are going to learn a lot from this win.”

The Lady Cats (1-0) got help from several other players as well.



**Louisburg freshman Madilyn Melton goes up for two of her nine points Friday against Pittsburg.**

Freshman Madilyn Melton came off the bench to score nine points in her first varsity game and added seven rebounds. Sophomore Haley Cain scored seven points, while senior Bailey Belcher made her varsity debut and scored seven points as well. Sophomore point guard Carlee Gassman added four points.

“It was great to get a win, at home, and in our season opener,” Lowry said. “We had a great crowd and a great student section and it was a lot of fun. For what we are right now, we learned so much throughout this game and grew up so much. Then watching film on their mistakes is going to be so awesome for

them and understanding their responsibilities.”

Louisburg got off to a quick start as it took an 8-2 lead on baskets from Belcher, Gassman and a 3-pointer from Buffington, who knocked down three in the game. Pittsburg eventually whittled the lead down to one, before Cain hit a jumper at the buzzer to give Louisburg momentum into the second quarter.

The Lady Cat built their lead to start the second as they went on a 10-1 run that was keyed by a pair of 3-pointers from Holtzen. Melton ended the run with a steal and score to put Louisburg up 10 points and took a 32-23 lead at halftime.

“Everyone played really well and stepped up,” Buffington said. “It is amazing to see how far we have come since we started practice two weeks ago.”

Both teams took a step back in the third quarter as the defenses took over as Louisburg and Pittsburg combined to commit 21 turnovers during the eight minute stretch.



**Point guard Carlee Gassman puts up a shot in the lane Friday in the Lady Cats' win over Pittsburg.**

"The first half was good offensively, but we knew that team over there (Pittsburg) is a good team and they are well coached and that it was going to be a battle in the second half," Lowry said. "It was a sloppy, slow third quarter and it probably wasn't a lot of fun to watch."

Louisburg held a 42-30 lead with four minutes left in the contest, before Pittsburg turned up the pressure and forced the Lady Cats into eight turnovers. The Purple Dragons whittled the Lady Cats' lead down to three, but Louisburg wouldn't let them get any closer.

"They persevered and they were tough through adversity," Lowry said of his team. "They did the things that you hope for as a coach and that you constantly talk to them about and it is up

to them to pull through. They were faced with adversity and making a lot of mistakes that a young, immature team will make, but they got through it and came together.”

The schedule doesn’t get easier for the Lady Cats this week as they take part in the Wildcat-Bulldog Classic at Baldwin High School. Louisburg will face Burlington today and will play Baldwin tomorrow before finishing up with Anderson County on Friday. Burlington and Baldwin are both ranked in the top 10 in Class 4A-Division II.

“This is the last year for the tournament, so the girls are looking forward to playing in it one more time,” Lowry said. “Burlington is always well-coached and a really good team that returns a lot from last year. They do a lot of things that we will have to prepare for. Baldwin is one of the best teams in 4A and Anderson County is always a scrappy team, so it should be a fun tournament.”

<b>LOU</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8 –</b>
<b>46</b>				
<b>PITT</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>– 43</b>				

LOUISBURG (1-0): Carson Buffington 4-7 1-2 12; Madilyn Melton 2-7 4-6 9; Bailey Belcher 3-13 1-4 7; Haley Cain 3-10 1-6 7; Isabelle Holtzen 2-6 1-3 7; Carlee Gassman 1-7 2-5 4. Totals: 15-54 10-26 46. 3-point field goals: 6, (Buffington 3, Holtzen 2, Melton).

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# Wildcat boys basketball hopes to build on state appearance



Louisburg head coach Ty Pfannenstiel is in first year with the Wildcat boys basketball team as he tries to build off the program's best finish in 12 years.

Last season, the Louisburg High School boys basketball team had its best finish in 12 years as the Wildcats earned a spot in the Class 4A-Division I state tournament.

It was a senior-laden team that caught fire at the right time and put together one final run.

However, almost every part of that team is gone and the Wildcats are ready to start anew for the 2017-18 season – from the players all the way to a new coaching staff.

Louisburg returns just one starter from a season ago and two other players that saw varsity time. The rest is a different lineup and a new head coach in Ty Pfannenstiel, who took over for Jason Nelson after he resigned at the end of last year.

Although there will be several fresh faces for the Wildcats, they hope this team can build on what last year's version accomplished.

"Absolutely we want to build off of that momentum," Pfannenstiel said. "The schedule is going to be grueling right off the bat, so we will have a battle on our hands each night.

These guys are competitors and the expectations are extremely high for this group.”

It has been a good offseason for the new Wildcat head coach as he used that time to get to know his team and what to expect out of this group. He also wanted to make sure the players knew what to expect from him.

Pfannenstiel came to Louisburg from Oakley High School, where he was the school’s athletic director, head football coach and head girls basketball coach. He also spent time as an assistant boys basketball coach at Gardner-Edgerton.

“I feel like the transition has been very smooth,” Pfannenstiel said. “We got a good start with our summer workouts and are just continuing to build off of that. My expectations are for our kids to be good representatives of Louisburg High School in how we prepare and compete on the court, and how we conduct ourselves off of the floor.

“Obviously, my system and terminology is new to these guys so there is a big learning curve. I think as the year moves on we will get more comfortable in what we do.”





**Senior Dalton Ribordy is the team's lone returning starter from last season's state tournament team.**

The Wildcats will lean heavily on their five returning seniors, including returning starter Dalton Ribordy. The Louisburg forward was a factor inside for the Wildcats last season and was among the team leaders in rebounds.

Ribordy (6-foot-4) will join seniors Ben Minster (6-1), Desmond Doles (6-4), Justin Sievert (6-0) and junior Brayden Gage (5-9) in the starting lineup. Minster and Doles also saw a lot of varsity minutes a season ago.

"I really like this group," Pfannenstiel said. "First of all, they are all good kids which makes coaching so much fun. Even though we have five seniors, our varsity experience will still be pretty limited at the start. Dalton has the most experience on the court. He has really emerged as a leader for us in

practice. He's a workhorse day in and day out and we are expecting a big year out of him. I think all the seniors are going to be major contributors for us, each in their own way."

Senior Parker Perentis (5-10), juniors Dylan De Shazer (6-4), Noah Hill (6-4), Kohl Vogel (6-1) and sophomore Madden Rutherford (6-3) will all see varsity time as well off the bench.

Pfannenstiel is also excited about the depth he has this season, which will allow the Wildcats to do some different things on both ends of the floor.

"I think we have pretty good depth and athleticism," he said. "I think this will allow us to play up tempo and be great on defense each night. Our kids are excited to play. We have a lot to learn, but I think we have made good progress each day."

Louisburg will get its season started Friday when it hosts Pittsburg. The tipoff will follow the varsity girls game, at approximately 7:30 p.m.

The Purple Dragons were picked to win SEK League and Pfannenstiel knows his team will be tested early and throughout the season.

"I want us to be extremely competitive each night," he said. "I think with last year's success, the expectations have been raised for this group, which is exactly how we want it. We expect to be great each night we step on the court."

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# Louisburg girls basketball excited for upcoming season



Senior Isabelle Holtzen is one of three seniors for the Louisburg girls basketball team this season and one of just four returning varsity players from a season ago.

The Louisburg High School girls basketball team will have a little different look to it this season – and for good reason.

Louisburg had to say goodbye to five seniors, four of whom were starters, off a team that improved by seven wins last year and finished with a 10-11 record and a close defeat in the sub-state semifinals.

The loss of production will be a hurdle for the Lady Cats to overcome this season, but they are welcoming the challenge with open arms as head coach Shawn Lowry is excited about his group of players.

“With having new and young players that have limited experience in the program, and at this level, the players with experience will be asked to play different roles at different times and I expect there to be a learning curve,” Lowry said. “However, what’s great about this group is that they are making big improvements each day because of how hard they work, their passion for wanting to learn and their unselfishness to do what’s best for their team.”

Lack of varsity experience is something the Lady Cats will have to deal with from time to time during the season.

Junior forward Carson Buffington is the team's lone returning starter. Buffington is a two-time all-Frontier League player after earning honorable mention honors a season ago.

Buffington led the Frontier League with 11 rebounds a game to go along with six points and two steals a contest. Lowry is hoping Buffington can have an even bigger season this year, especially on the offensive end.



**Junior Carson Buffington is the lone returning starter for Louisburg, who led the Frontier League with 11 rebounds a game.**

Louisburg returns senior guards Isabelle Holtzen and Mikayla Quinn, who gave the Lady Cats minutes off the bench last season. Senior Bailey Belcher, who is in her first year with

the program, will also look to give the Lady Cats some help at the guard/forward spot.

“Isabelle and Mikayla have been in the program for all four years,” Lowry said. “They have both grown so much in that time and have really matured into good leaders. They embrace the process, they are great teammates and have a great deal of pride in their program.

“Bailey is a great fit and has already made an immediate impact to our team by her work ethic, toughness and athleticism. She is a great competitor and will continue to make big gains with each day.”

Buffington, Holtzen and Belcher will begin the season in the starting lineup and will provide the Lady Cats with a lot of quickness and athleticism.

Louisburg will also feature a new point guard in sophomore Carlee Gassman, who transferred in from Iowa this year. Gassman will be the floor general and will be joined by sophomore forward Haley Cain in the starting five. Cain saw some time off the bench last season as a freshman.

Quinn, along with sophomores Sydni Keagle, Reilly Ratliff-Becher and freshman Madilyn Melton, will also see time off the bench.

The new personnel will bring some changes to the Lady Cats’ offensive and defensive philosophy, but the attitude hasn’t changed.

“What’s been great about our program the last couple of years has been the growth and maturation in the leadership of our young players,” Lowry said. “We have several sophomores that came into this season much stronger, more confident and with much improved fundamentals because of their commitment.

“Although the mentality with how we want to play the game

doesn't change year to year, we will look to change up some things we do both offensively and defensively based on our personnel this year."

Like most seasons, Louisburg will be competing in a difficult Frontier League as it will face off with state-ranked teams such as Paola (Class 4A-DI, No. 5), Baldwin (4A-D2, No. 10) and De Soto (5A, No. 9). The Lady Cats will also see Burlington (4A-D2, No. 6) early in the year.

"The Frontier League will again have some of the very best teams in the state," Lowry said. "In addition to a very strong league, we will have the opportunity to play some very good and ranked teams in our non-conference and tournament schedule. With all this said, I trust in our players to compete with great effort and pride every time we take the floor."

Louisburg will open its season at home Friday when it hosts Pittsburg. Tipoff is set for approximately 6 p.m., and the Lady Cats are ready to get the game started.

"The girls have worked hard in preparing for the upcoming season," Lowry said. "Our upperclassmen have helped foster an environment that is competitive and positive with their work ethic and attitudes.

"The girls are always anxious to start playing games after the preseason conditioning work and three weeks of practice."

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**KSHSAA      releases      2017-18**

# classifications



The Kansas High School Activities Association released the classifications for the 2017-18 season on Tuesday morning, and for Louisburg High School, much remains the same.

The Wildcats are currently a Class 4A-Division I program with 532 students, but after this season the classification system will change. Class 4A will get rid of the divisions and 4A will have just 36 schools. Louisburg is still expected to be in 4A for the foreseeable future.

However, several schools across the state made classification changes.

## Kansas State High School Activities Association

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Approved Executive Director: [Signature]

September 26, 2017  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The 2017-18 KSHSAA senior high membership is 354 schools. Wichita-Horrell Magnet school is an unclassified member school.

School classification changes with enrollment ranges are as follows:  
[Last year's (2016-2017) classification is shown in parentheses.]

Class	Number of Schools	Range	Schools Changing Class
9A	32	2404 - 1389	Kansas City-Cliff Harrison (5A)
5A	32	1393 - 913	Kansas City-Wyandotte (5A) Marian South (5A) Cherokee West (5A)
4A	61	791 - 282	Arkansas City (5A) Galena (5A) Hugoton (5A) Kansas City-Summer Academy (5A) Marysville (5A)
3A	66	285 - 156	Colby (4A) Goodland (4A) Harris (4A) Marysville (5A) Booth Community (4A)
2A	66	150 - 92	Burlington (1A) Stewart (1A) Johnson-Holmgren County (1A) La Crosse (1A) Marian (2A) Cape (1A) Salina (1A) St. Francis (1A) Bryansville (3A)
1A	97	92 - 20	Alamosa-Riverside County (2A) Cottonwood-Pueblo County (2A) Marian-Marian County (2A) Riverview (2A) St. Ann-Holston (2A) Troy (2A) Valley Park (2A) Washington County (2A)

## 2017-2018 Classifications and Enrollments

Enrollment figures as of September 26, 2017  
based on sixth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades.

Note: Schools are listed in descending order.

Class	Number of Schools	Range	Schools Changing Class
6A	32	2404 - 1389	Kansas City-Cliff Harrison (5A)
5A	32	1393 - 913	Kansas City-Wyandotte (5A) Marian South (5A) Cherokee West (5A)
4A	61	791 - 282	Arkansas City (5A) Galena (5A) Hugoton (5A) Kansas City-Summer Academy (5A) Marysville (5A)
3A	66	285 - 156	Colby (4A) Goodland (4A) Harris (4A) Marysville (5A) Booth Community (4A)
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1A	97	92 - 20	Alamosa-Riverside County (2A) Cottonwood-Pueblo County (2A) Marian-Marian County (2A) Riverview (2A) St. Ann-Holston (2A) Troy (2A) Valley Park (2A) Washington County (2A)



4A

Class	Number of Schools	Range	Schools Changing Class
4A	36	2404 - 1389	Kansas City-Cliff Harrison (5A)
5A	32	1393 - 913	Kansas City-Wyandotte (5A) Marian South (5A) Cherokee West (5A)
4A	61	791 - 282	Arkansas City (5A) Galena (5A) Hugoton (5A) Kansas City-Summer Academy (5A) Marysville (5A)
3A	66	285 - 156	Colby (4A) Goodland (4A) Harris (4A) Marysville (5A) Booth Community (4A)
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1A	97	92 - 20	Alamosa-Riverside County (2A) Cottonwood-Pueblo County (2A) Marian-Marian County (2A) Riverview (2A) St. Ann-Holston (2A) Troy (2A) Valley Park (2A) Washington County (2A)

\* Note: Per classification Rule 4-2.2, enrollment data was broken by using the previous classification class event.  
\* Note: Classes 1A and 2A are divided into two divisions in selected activities. Refer to specific activity pages on the website for more information.

Arkansas City and Sumner Academy dropped from Class 5A to 4A for the upcoming season, while Galena, Hugoton and Marysville

all moved up to 4A. Maize South jumped from 4A to 5A.

Colby , Goodland, Scott City and Haven all dropped from 4A to 3A schools, while McLouth moved up from 2A to 3A.

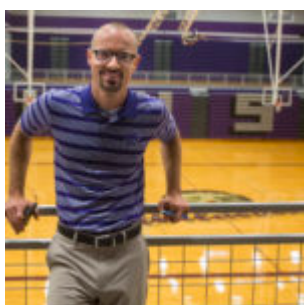


Hays is currently the largest 4A school with 791 students, followed by Sumner Academy (782), Andover Central (764), Bonner Springs (762) and Arkansas City (757).

Sub-state and regional assignments for the fall season will be released in the coming days.

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## Holloway excited for new role as LHS activities director



**Louisburg High School activities director Jeremy Holloway is looking forward to his new position as he starts his 17th year in the USD 416 school district.**

Growing up, Jeremy Holloway wasn't one to stay in a place for too long.

Holloway spent most of his childhood and young adult life moving from place to place. He wasn't the type of person who envisioned himself putting down roots.

"I was a constant migrant," Holloway said.

That was until he moved to Louisburg with his wife Megan. Now instead of a migrant, Holloway is deep-rooted in a town he loves.

It made his decision, almost two months ago, an easy one.

Back in June, Holloway was hired as the new Louisburg High School activities director and assistant principal, following the resignation of former activities director Darin Gagnebin. Holloway, who has spent the last 16 years as a teacher at Louisburg Middle School, is ready for the new challenge.

"I am really looking forward to it," Holloway said. "I have been here in Louisburg for 17 years. I never lived anywhere for more than four years in my life until I came to Louisburg. I never knew what it was like to be a part of a community and when I got here I just fell in love with the town. I was excited to become a part of it and Louisburg became important to me. The teaching was great and getting to know all the kids and see them grow up all the way through college was fun. Now I see some of my former students teaching in the building here and it is an amazing feeling. It just felt like home to me."

Fate seemed to step in at the right time for Holloway. He entered the summer still planning to teach history at the



middle school, but the dominoes quickly started to fall into place.

Holloway was well on his way to getting his administration degree this past school year as he was planning on holding on to it until something in Louisburg came open. He didn't have to wait long.

"I had to get recertified, so I talked with my wife and I said why get an education masters if it is just going to move me on the pay scale," he said. "Why not get an administration degree to have options? There are other places near here that are looking for people, but that isn't what I want. The only move I would make is to stay in Louisburg. I happened to be down in Eureka Springs on vacation and I got a text in middle of night that Gagnebin had resigned. I had just got my diploma the day before we left. I applied and it turned out well and hopefully it was a good thing."

Louisburg USD 416 superintendent Dr. Brian Biermann had to sift through more than 20 different applicants for the job, but he believes Holloway is going to do great things in the position.

"Jeremy has been a loyal and dedicated teacher and coach in our community for 17 years," Dr. Biermann said. "Jeremy possesses many strong leadership attributes that will allow him to be a strong, instructional leader at Louisburg High School. He is passionate about education, has a strong work ethic and is committed to our community.

"Jeremy is all about building positive relationships with students, staff and the community. For 17 years he has been building these relationships. Now, he will be able to build upon his unique skill set in a leadership position in our district. I am excited to see the great things Mr. Holloway can contribute to our district and community in this new role."



One of the first things Holloway wanted to do was to get to know his new coaching staff. Several new coaches were hired this past school year and he wanted to see what they were all about.

“I just want them to feel comfortable with me and let them understand that I am approachable,” Holloway said. “That relationship piece is huge. I am getting to know where they are from, how many kids they have and I want them to feel comfortable coming to me. We do lose some great experience, but we have gained some capable coaches and a lot of enthusiasm. I just want to be a positive impact for them.”

Since he started officially on July 24, Holloway has been hard at work in several different areas, but one of the bigger things going on now is the shuffling of the Frontier League.

The league, which will be at seven schools this year, will move up to nine starting for the 2018-19 school year. Bonner Springs, Tonganoxie and Piper will join the league, while De Soto will depart.

Baldwin, an original league member, is concerned the school will move down to Class 3A starting in 2018-19, thanks to changes in the classification system. If it happens, it will create scheduling conflicts for football.

“The biggest conflict right now is Baldwin is right on the edge of becoming 3A and they think it will happen,” Holloway said. “If Baldwin is in our league, which is what we plan on, they are required to play five district games for football, which only leaves them three league games. If only three league teams play Baldwin, then the rest of the league teams have to find another team to play. I have schools from Lansing, Independence, Coffeyville, Chanute and other schools calling me trying to lock up games. There are so many different scenarios so we just have to wait and see. That is one thing that I am really working on right now.”

With the activity season fast approaching, Holloway is excited for everything to get underway. He is also looking forward to getting to know the fan base more.

“I have always been highly impressed of Louisburg and the support of its teams and the turnout we will get, especially for football games,” Holloway said. “I encourage Louisburg to continue the tradition of being a class act. I think that every town has its own culture and a lot of it starts with the coaches. If your coaches are harassing refs, your players are probably going to start to learn that they can do that and that will trickle down to the parents and crowd. Without pointing fingers, there are certain places where that is the climate. I think Louisburg has been great. There are always going to be situations, but I would encourage fans and parents to support our coaches and let them coach.

“I am looking forward to an exciting year. We have great coaches, that are experienced and they are very innovative. They are organized and they all seem truly excited about what is going on. The community can rest assured that the coaches that are in place right now have the best interest of the kids and the programs.”

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## **Opinion: Time to look back and enjoy successes**



**The Louisburg High School football team was one of many bright spots for LHS athletics this past school year.**

We live in a world where, especially in sports, we often don't take time to reflect on our accomplishments – and instead we are in a rush to move on to the next set of obstacles.

In reality, we are in a “what have you done for me lately” society and sometimes don't remember, or enjoy, those special moments where our hard work has paid off.

Yes, I understand you don't want to relish in those accomplishments as that doesn't make you a better athlete, or whatever your specialty may be, but not taking the time to enjoy the ride can be detrimental.

And what a ride it was for Louisburg High School athletics this past season.

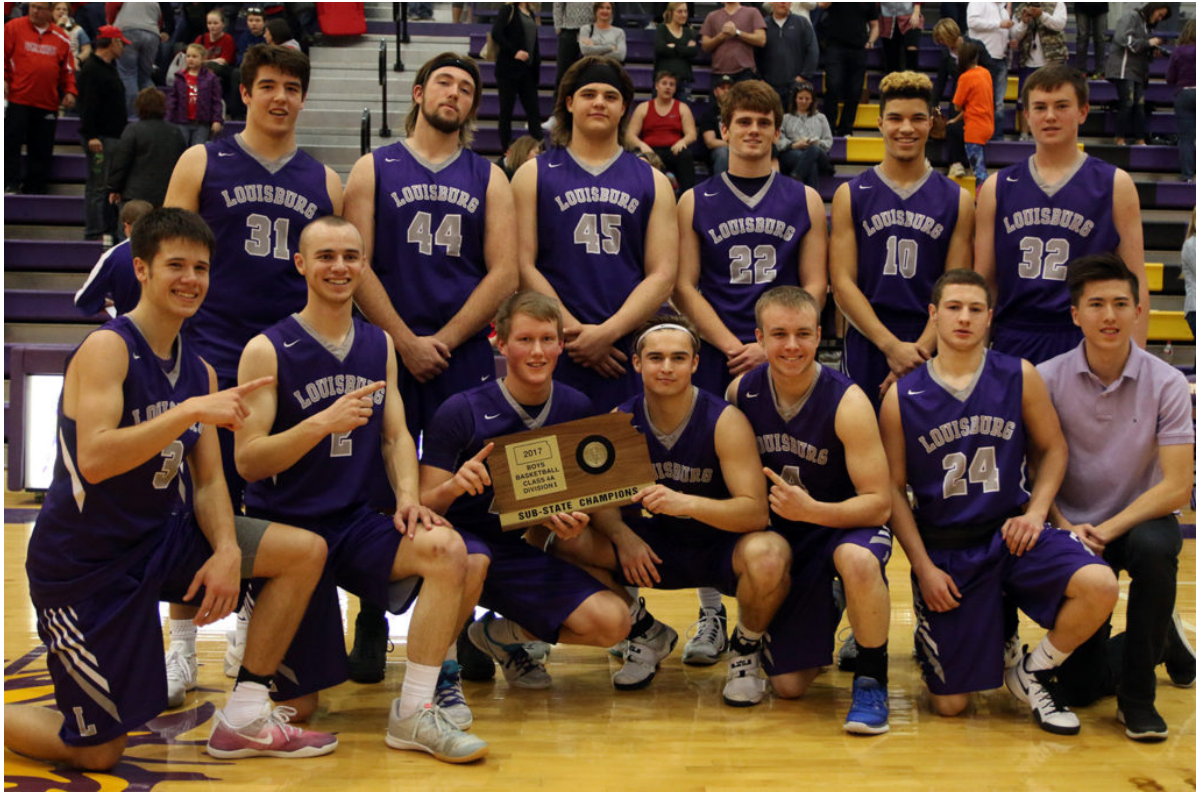
The Wildcats had a special year in several sports, and before we focus on the 2017-18 campaign, we should look back at what the 16-17 season brought us. Just take a look at what these Wildcats accomplished.

- There is probably no better place to start than the Louisburg soccer teams. Both the boys and girls teams earned spots in the state semifinals for the first time in program history and both finished fourth. The boys team made it to state for the first time in their 14 years, while the girls advanced to the state tournament in just their second season.



**The Louisburg High School girls soccer team finished fourth in the state in just their second season. The Wildcat boys also finished fourth as they advanced to the state semifinals for the first time in program history.**

- It was quite the season for the Wildcat boys basketball team as they advanced to the state tournament for the first time since 2005. Louisburg won its sub-state tournament with a 64-52 win over Fort Scott in the championship game.



**The Louisburg boys basketball team qualified for state for the first time since 2005.**

- The Louisburg football team made quite the run in the 2016 season. The Wildcats won their first playoff game since 2012 and earned a regional title in the process with a win over Independence. Even though their season came to an end in the next round to eventual state champion Bishop Miege, the Wildcats' still finished with an 8-3 record.
- Wrestling had another big season as the Wildcats qualified eight for the Class 4A state tournament in Salina. Although Ryan Adams was the lone state medalist, as he finished sixth overall at 138 pounds, the Wildcats tied a school record for number of state qualifiers that was set back in 1984.
- In cross country, the Wildcats sent three runners to the state meet and had their first state medalist since 2006 when freshman Trinity Moore finished 19th overall, as she, Wyatt Reece and Tim Smith competed at the Wamego meet. Moore was also the school's first female runner to earn a state medal.



- Freshman golfer Calvin Dillon became the Wildcats' first state medalist in several years as he finished 10th at the Class 4A state tournament and was one of two Wildcats, along with Ty Martin, to qualify for state. Dillon could quite possibly be the first freshman golfer in school history to get a medal, but since golf stats aren't quite as well kept, it is hard to tell for sure.
- T.J. Dover and Isabelle Holtzen came through with state medals of their own following the state track meet. Holtzen finished seventh at the Class 4A meet in the pole vault and Dover was eighth in the discus as both medaled for the first time. Holtzen also broke the school record in the pole vault earlier in the season after she cleared 11 feet, 1 inch.
- The girls basketball and softball teams both had big improvements from a season ago as they each reached 10 wins despite falling in the first round of their sub-state and regional tournaments. Softball doubled their win total from 2016, while the girls basketball team improved by seven victories.
- The Louisburg volleyball team advanced to the sub-state championship game against rival Paola and was just a few points away from advancing to its fifth consecutive state tournament. The Lady Cats also finished the season with 23 victories.

Most schools across the state would love to have the kind of success Louisburg experienced this year and to me that doesn't seem like it is talked about enough.

Sometimes we get caught up in losses or not meeting expectations, when in fact, compared to a lot of schools, Louisburg exceeds expectations – at least it does mine.

Could these programs be better? Sure they could and the coaches would be the first to tell you. At the same time, we all need to take a step back, look at the big picture and enjoy the success we have.

To me, Louisburg athletics is as healthy as it has been in a long time.

A lot has been made about all the coaches that have left recently. Louisburg will have four new head coaches this upcoming school year and several new assistants.

Some people have considered this a mass exodus due problems at the school. It couldn't be further from the truth. A lot of it is just coincidence. For some it was retirement, others wanted to spend more time with family and a few more just wanted a change.

Former activities director Darin Gagenbin left to be closer to his family and work in the town where he lives. I know all about how great of an opportunity that is and it is the same thing I did almost 10 years ago when I moved here with my family. Working in the town you live in is something you can't put a value on.

Louisburg found a great replacement in Jeremy Holloway, who has been with the district for 17 years and is invested in the community. The school has also brought in a lot of new, young coaches that have come in with excitement and new ideas.

It is bittersweet for me as a lot of those coaches I had a chance to get to know really well are now gone. Although I am mainly a solo operation, I consider a lot of them my co-workers and it stinks to see them move on, but I also know they are doing the best for themselves and their families.

The same could be said for the class of 2017. The group of seniors I worked with this past year were great to get to know, just like all the senior classes before them.

I appreciated all their support and what I do could not be done without those kids. It is great to see them grow up and watch them become successful outside the classroom. I am not a teacher or coach, but still appreciate all they accomplish.

With 2016-17 in the rear view mirror, it will soon be time to focus on the upcoming season and I couldn't be more excited to see what accomplishments this group of Wildcats have in store. It has all the makings of a fun and special year.

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## Gagnebin steps down as LHS activities director



Louisburg High School activities director Darin Gagnebin presents the Wildcat girls soccer team with their regional championship trophy last month. Gagnebin resigned his post earlier this month to take a similar position in Paola.

Darin Gagnebin has a fondness for Louisburg High School, his coaches and students.

That made it all the more hard to say goodbye.

Gagnebin resigned his post as LHS assistant principal and activities director earlier this month to tentatively take the same position at Paola High School. His last day in Louisburg was last week.

Gagnebin spent a total of 17 years in the Louisburg school



district, with the last six spent as activities director. He was also a teacher and coach for 11 years.

Family was the biggest reason he decided to make the move. Gagnebin and his family currently reside in Paola and his two children attend schools in Paola.

"People have come and gone, but it is still family here," Gagnebin said. "I am comfortable here and Louisburg has done a lot for me. I just can't pass up an opportunity to be where my kids are at. I know I could have brought my kids here, but my wife and I made that decision a long time ago of where we were going to live because of where she taught and I taught. I never thought back when we first moved to Paola and when we had kids, that we would be in this position."

It was a difficult decision for Gagnebin as he leaves behind a group of coaches, several of whom he recently hired. The Louisburg district had a number of new coaches come on board for the upcoming school year.

"We have gone through some trials in the last couple of years and that is with any school," Gagnebin said. "I told my wife, that if this was going to happen the way it did and I could pick the time, I wish the timing would have happened two years down the road. I would have loved to see what this young group of teachers and coaches are going to do coming in."

"I told my wife that I was really excited about coming back next year and I felt we made some good hires. We have a passionate coaching staff coming on and they are great people with new ideas. It just happened out of the blue."

The opening came when former Paola High School principal Phil Bressler took the new principal job at Pittsburg High School. Paola assistant principal and activities director Jeff Hines was elevated to the Paola principal position, which left the Panthers needing an activities director.

It can be traced back even further when the Pittsburg High School journalism class wrote an investigative piece that ousted its newly hired principal, which forced the school to reopen the position and eventually hired Bressler.

“Had Pittsburg’s journalism class not done their job, we wouldn’t be sitting here talking right now,” Gagnebin said.

The Paola position was an opportunity Gagnebin just couldn’t pass up as he will have an opportunity to watch more of his children’s events and work closer to home.

“I have missed a lot of my own kids’ stuff,” he said. “But the people here have been really great, (Principal) Tammy (Thomasson) now and Dave (Tappan) before her, to let me try to get to as much stuff as I can. I still miss things. These opportunities don’t come around very often and I just figured this would be a great fit for me and my family.

“But I couldn’t ask for a better group of coaches here in Louisburg. They are good and passionate about what they do. I really have developed some good bonds over the years. I know some have left and some have stayed on, but the coaches and staff I have had has been great.”

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## **Changes to classification system will impact Louisburg**



Member schools in the Kansas State High School Activities Association sent ripples across the state last week when they passed two proposals that will affect high school athletics beginning in the 2018-19 season.

For football, the two 4A divisions and Class 2-1A have been eliminated. They have been replaced with 32 team classifications in 4A, 5A and 6A, while 3A and 2A will have 48-team classifications. The remaining schools will play in 1A.

The second proposal was for all other sports. Other than football, classes 4A, 5A and 6A will have 36 teams in each division. Classes 3A and 2A will have 64 schools each, while the remaining schools will be in 1A.

The football proposal passed with a vote of 215-73 and the all-sports proposal passed with a 207-145 majority. All of the classes, except 6A and 1A, were in favor.

With those new proposals comes a different playoff system for many of the sports.

Louisburg High School, which is a Class 4A school, will see changes in five sports programs – football, basketball, baseball, softball and volleyball.

In football, Louisburg will no longer have district play as the playoffs will begin in week nine. Class 4A will play an eight-game regular season and then each side of the state will be seeded in a bracket from 1 through 16, based on their record.

Given the fact the Frontier League currently has nine teams after recently adding three schools in Tonganoxie, Bonner Springs and Piper, the Wildcats will no longer have to play a non-league opponent. De Soto recently chose to leave the Frontier League following the 2017-18 season to join a new league made up of 5A schools.

"Normally we go out in October to Salina, we would redistrict for 2018 and 2019," Louisburg activities director Darin Gagnebin said. "I don't even know that we will have to go cause our league has nine teams, so we would play eight league games and the ninth game gets assigned to you for the playoffs. As of right now in football, we will no longer have any out of conference opponents as long as we maintain nine in the league."

Another change will be in basketball. For the postseason, there will no longer be substates, instead the 18 teams on each side of the state will be bracketed out by record beginning with two play-in games.

From there, the bracket will be sized down to four-team pods, with the higher seed hosting the game. Teams will have to win two games to reach the state tournaments. Pods will be 1-16-8-9 seeds, 4-13-5-12, 2-15-7-10 and 3-14-6-11. The eight pod winners will advance to the state tournament.

"Depending on where we fall, it could increase travel depending on where we are seeded," Gagnebin said. "We could have to drive down to Coffeyville or drive up to Atchison, you just don't know until the end of the year."

Basketball schedules will also be different with the addition of the new league teams in 2018-19. There will no longer be double round-robin schedules. There will be eight league games, six tournament games and athletic directors will have to find a way to fill the other six.

"We will start in August about building the new league

schedule and it will be tough," Gagnebin said. "One thing you will see is we won't have double round-robin's anymore because we can't play everyone twice. I think there will be traditional rivalries that are held to where we would play those twice due to proximity. Quite frankly, it wouldn't be smart for Louisburg not to play Paola, Ottawa or Spring Hill twice due to higher attendance numbers and proximity. It will probably increase travel costs because you are playing more non-conference opponents."

Baseball and softball will be similar as there will no longer be regionals. Like basketball, there will be two play-in games with the same pod structure. The top four overall seeds will each host all games in their pod on the same day.

In volleyball, there will be four substates across the state, broken into eight brackets. There will also be nine teams in each substate, which will require a play-in game. Teams will need to win two games to qualify for state.

Postseasons for wrestling, track, soccer, cross country and golf will remain the same.

However, even with the new changes, the proposals don't address the competitive balance issue between public and private schools that many members have been talking about for the last several years.

Although he likes the new playoff system, the fact these changes don't address the problem is one of the reasons Gagnebin voted no on the new proposals.

"It was a shock because I didn't think it was going to pass," Gagnebin said. "Other than the playoff system, in my opinion, it doesn't do anything for Class 4A. All the work that went into splitting 4A into two divisions is now gone. I feel bad for those schools because they put in a ton of work. It doesn't really affect us because we are locked into 4A and we are right in the middle of the pack."

"I didn't see how it benefited Louisburg or 4A, other than the playoffs system where it should ensure you have more competitive teams at state. Since you are seeding them out now, you shouldn't have a substate of teams with losing records. They could have done that without this."

Although private schools like Bishop Miege, which have won several state titles in the last few years, could find itself moving up a classification with the new measures, it isn't a permanent solution according to Gagnebin.

"Enrollment could bump some private schools up a class, but that doesn't fix the problem," Gagnebin said. "Private schools can control enrollment. According to (Miege) they are losing enrollment and could be back in 4A. It doesn't impact the private issue at all and that is why I didn't vote for it. It is not fixing what the 80 percent of athletic directors polled in Kansas asking what the biggest problems in classifications are. It doesn't address the real problem."