

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."

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."

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.



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School classification changes with enrollment ranges are as follows:
K-6th, 7th-8th, 9th-10th classification is shown in parentheses.

Class	Number of Schools	Range
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Year	Number of cases	Rate per 100,000
1990	1,000	1.0
1991	1,100	1.1
1992	1,200	1.2
1993	1,300	1.3
1994	1,400	1.4
1995	1,500	1.5
1996	1,600	1.6
1997	1,700	1.7
1998	1,800	1.8
1999	1,900	1.9
2000	2,000	2.0
2001	2,100	2.1
2002	2,200	2.2
2003	2,300	2.3
2004	2,400	2.4
2005	2,500	2.5
2006	2,600	2.6
2007	2,700	2.7
2008	2,800	2.8
2009	2,900	2.9
2010	3,000	3.0
2011	3,100	3.1
2012	3,200	3.2
2013	3,300	3.3
2014	3,400	3.4
2015	3,500	3.5
2016	3,600	3.6
2017	3,700	3.7
2018	3,800	3.8
2019	3,900	3.9
2020	4,000	4.0

SA	Year	Project Title	Location
5A	12	1980 - 1989	Kansas City-JC Harmon (2A)
			Kansas City-Hypocrite (5A)
			Mass South
			Clatsop West (New)
4A	04	791 - 200	Arkansas City (2A)
			Georgia (2A)
			Ingomar (3A)
			Kansas City-Battler Academy (3A)
			Marquette (2A)
3A	04	200 - 150	Colby (4A)
			Goodland (4A)
			Irwin (2A)
			Midvale (2A)
			South Community (4A)
2A	04	150 - 90	Butterburg (1A)
			Bonanza (1A)
			Johnson-Holmes County (1A)
			Le Centre (1A)
			Mason (1A)
			Clips (1A)
			Battler St. John's Military Academy (1A)
			St. Francis (1A)
			Wrayman (1A)
1A	07	90 - 20	Atwood-Ravenna County (3A)
			Culturaland Falls-Chase County (2A)
			North-Marmaton Valley (2A)
			Rosalia-Finley (2A)
			St. John-Hudson (2A)
			Troy (2A)
			Valley Falls (2A)
			Washington County (2A)

[illegible]

4A	4B	5A	5B	6A	6B	7A	7B	8A	8B	9A	9B	10A	10B	11A	11B	12A	12B	13A	13B	14A	14B	15A	15B	16A	16B	17A	17B	18A	18B	19A	19B	20A	20B	21A	21B	22A	22B	23A	23B	24A	24B	25A	25B	26A	26B	27A	27B	28A	28B	29A	29B	30A	30B	31A	31B	32A	32B	33A	33B	34A	34B	35A	35B	36A	36B	37A	37B	38A	38B	39A	39B	40A	40B	41A	41B	42A	42B	43A	43B	44A	44B	45A	45B	46A	46B	47A	47B	48A	48B	49A	49B	50A	50B	51A	51B	52A	52B	53A	53B	54A	54B	55A	55B	56A	56B	57A	57B	58A	58B	59A	59B	60A	60B	61A	61B	62A	62B	63A	63B	64A	64B	65A	65B	66A	66B	67A	67B	68A	68B	69A	69B	70A	70B	71A	71B	72A	72B	73A	73B	74A	74B	75A	75B	76A	76B	77A	77B	78A	78B	79A	79B	80A	80B	81A	81B	82A	82B	83A	83B	84A	84B	85A	85B	86A	86B	87A	87B	88A	88B	89A	89B	90A	90B	91A	91B	92A	92B	93A	93B	94A	94B	95A	95B	96A	96B	97A	97B	98A	98B	99A	99B	100A	100B	101A	101B	102A	102B	103A	103B	104A	104B	105A	105B	106A	106B	107A	107B	108A	108B	109A	109B	110A	110B	111A	111B	112A	112B	113A	113B	114A	114B	115A	115B	116A	116B	117A	117B	118A	118B	119A	119B	120A	120B	121A	121B	122A	122B	123A	123B	124A	124B	125A	125B	126A	126B	127A	127B	128A	128B	129A	129B	130A	130B	131A	131B	132A	132B	133A	133B	134A	134B	135A	135B	136A	136B	137A	137B	138A	138B	139A	139B	140A	140B	141A	141B	142A	142B	143A	143B	144A	144B	145A	145B	146A	146B	147A	147B	148A	148B	149A	149B	150A	150B	151A	151B	152A	152B	153A	153B	154A	154B	155A	155B	156A	156B	157A	157B	158A	158B	159A	159B	160A	160B	161A	161B	162A	162B	163A	163B	164A	164B	165A	165B	166A	166B	167A	167B	168A	168B	169A	169B	170A	170B	171A	171B	172A	172B	173A	173B	174A	174B	175A	175B	176A	176B	177A	177B	178A	178B	179A	179B	180A	180B	181A	181B	182A	182B	183A	183B	184A	184B	185A	185B	186A	186B	187A	187B	188A	188B	189A	189B	190A	190B	191A	191B	192A	192B	193A	193B	194A	194B	195A	195B	196A	196B	197A	197B	198A	198B	199A	199B	200A	200B	201A	201B	202A	202B	203A	203B	204A	204B	205A	205B	206A	206B	207A	207B	208A	208B	209A	209B	210A	210B	211A	211B	212A	212B	213A	213B	214A	214B	215A	215B	216A	216B	217A	217B	218A	218B	219A	219B	220A	220B	221A	221B	222A	222B	223A	223B	224A	224B	225A	225B	226A	226B	227A	227B	228A	228B	229A	229B	230A	230B	231A	231B	232A	232B	233A	233B	234A	234B	235A	235B	236A	236B	237A	237B	238A	238B	239A	239B	240A	240B	241A	241B	242A	242B	243A	243B	244A	244B	245A	245B	246A	246B	247A	247B	248A	248B	249A	249B	250A	250B	251A	251B	252A	252B	253A	253B	254A	254B	255A	255B	256A	256B	257A	257B	258A	258B	259A	259B	260A	260B	261A	261B	262A	262B	263A	263B	264A	264B	265A	265B	266A	266B	267A	267B	268A	268B	269A	269B	270A	270B	271A	271B	272A	272B	273A	273B	274A	274B	275A	275B	276A	276B	277A	277B	278A	278B	279A	279B	280A	280B	281A	281B	282A	282B	283A	283B	284A	284B	285A	285B	286A	286B	287A	287B	288A	288B	289A	289B	290A	290B	291A	291B	292A	292B	293A	293B	294A	294B	295A	295B	296A	296B	297A	297B	298A	298B	299A	299B	300A	300B	301A	301B	302A	302B	303A	303B	304A	304B	305A	305B	306A	306B	307A	307B	308A	308B	309A	309B	310A	310B	311A	311B	312A	312B	313A	313B	314A	314B	315A	315B	316A	316B	317A	317B	318A	318B	319A	319B	320A	320B	321A	321B	322A	322B	323A	323B	324A	324B	325A	325B	326A	326B	327A	327B	328A	328B	329A	329B	330A	330B	331A	331B	332A	332B	333A	333B	334A	334B	335A	335B	336A	336B	337A	337B	338A	338B	339A	339B	340A	340B	341A	341B	342A	342B	343A	343B	344A	344B	345A	345B	346A	346B	347A	347B	348A	348B	349A	349B	350A	350B	351A	351B	352A	352B	353A	353B	354A	354B	355A	355B	356A	356B	357A	357B	358A	358B	359A	359B	360A	360B	361A	361B	362A	362B	363A	363B	364A	364B	365A	365B	366A	366B	367A	367B	368A	368B	369A	369B	370A	370B	371A	371B	372A	372B	373A	373B	374A	374B	375A	375B	376A	376B	377A	377B	378A	378B	379A	379B	380A	380B	381A	381B	382A	382B	383A	383B	384A	384B	385A	385B	386A	386B	387A	387B	388A	388B	389A	389B	390A	390B	391A	391B	392A	392B	393A	393B	394A	394B	395A	395B	396A	396B	397A	397B	398A	398B	399A	399B	400A	400B	401A	401B	402A	402B	403A	403B	404A	404B	405A	405B	406A	406B	407A	407B	408A	408B	409A	409B	410A	410B	411A	411B	412A	412B	413A	413B	414A	414B	415A	415B	416A	416B	417A	417B	418A	418B	419A	419B	420A	420B	421A	421B	422A	422B	423A	423B	424A	424B	425A	425B	426A	426B	427A	427B	428A	428B	429A	429B	430A	430B	431A	431B	432A	432B	433A	433B	434A	434B	435A	435B	436A	436B	437A	437B	438A	438B	439A	439B	440A	440B	441A	441B	442A	442B	443A	443B	444A	444B	445A	445B	446A	446B	447A	447B	448A	448B	449A	449B	450A	450B	451A	451B	452A	452B	453A	453B	454A	454B	455A	455B	456A	456B	457A	457B	458A	458B	459A	459B	460A	460B	461A	461B	462A	462B	463A	463B	464A	464B	465A	465B	466A	466B	467A	467B	468A	468B	469A	469B	470A	470B	471A	471B	472A	472B	473A	473B	474A	474B	475A	475B	476A	476B	477A	477B	478A	478B	479A	479B	480A	480B	481A	481B	482A	482B	483A	483B	484A	484B	485A	485B	486A	486B	487A	487B	488A	488B	489A	489B	490A	490B	491A	491B	492A	492B	493A	493B	494A	494B	495A	495B	496A	496B	497A	497B	498A	498B	499A	499B	500A	500B	501A	501B	502A	502B	503A	503B	504A	504B	505A	505B	506A	506B	507A	507B	508A	508B	509A	509B	510A	510B	511A	511B	512A	512B	513A	513B	514A	514B	515A	515B	516A	516B	517A	517B	518A	518B	519A	519B	520A	520B	521A	521B	522A	522B	523A	523B	524A	524B	525A	525B	526A	526B	527A	527B	528A	528B	529A	529B	530A	530B	531A	531B	532A	532B	533A	533B	534A	534B	535A	535B	536A	536B	537A	537B	538A	538B	539A	539B	540A	540B	541A	541B	542A	542B	543A	543B	544A	544B	545A	545B	546A	546B	547A	547B	548A	548B	549A	549B	550A	550B	551A	551B	552A	552B	553A	553B	554A	554B	555A	555B	556A	556B	557A	557B	558A	558B	559A	559B	560A	560B	561A	561B	562A	562B	563A	563B	564A	564B	565A	565B	566A	566B	567A	567B	568A	568B	569A	569B	570A	570B	571A	571B	572A	572B	573A	573B	574A	574B	575A	575B	576A	576B	577A	577B	578A	578B	579A	579B	580A	580B	581A	581B	582A	582B	583A	583B	584A	584B	585A	585B	586A	586B	587A	587B	588A	588B	589A	589B	590A	590B	591A	591B	592A	592B	593A	593B	594A	594B	595A	595B	596A	596B	597A	597B	598A	598B	599A	599B	600A	600B	601A	601B	602A	602B	603A	603B	604A	604B	605A	605B	606A	606B	607A	607B	608A	608B	609A	609B	610A	610B	611A	611B	612A	612B	613A	613B	614A	614B	615A	615B	616A	616B	617A	617B	618A	618B	619A	619B	620A	620B	621A	621B	622A	622B	623A	623B	624A	624B	625A	625B	626A	626B	627A	627B	628A	628B	629A	629B	630A	630B	631A	631B	632A	632B	633A	633B	634A	634B	635A	635B	636A	636B	637A	637B	638A	638B	639A	639B	640A	640B	641A	641B	642A	642B	643A	643B	644A	644B	645A	645B	646A	646B	647A	647B	648A	648B	649A	649B	650A	650B	651A	651B	652A	652B	653A	653B	654A	654B	655A	655B	656A	656B	657A	657B	658A	658B	659A	659B	660A	660B	661A	661B	662A	662B	663A	663B	664A	664B	665A	665B	666A	666B	667A	667B	668A	668B	669A	669B	670A	670B	671A	671B	672A	672B	673A	673B	674A	674B	675A	675B	676A	676B	677A	677B	678A	678B	679A	679B	680A	680B	681A	681B	682A	682B	683A	683B	684A	684B	685A	685B	686A	686B	687A	687B	688A	688B	689A	689B	690A	690B	691A	691B	692A	692B	693A	693B	694A	694B	695A	695B	696A	696B	697A	697B	698A	698B	699A	699B	700A	700B	701A
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- * *Note:* Per-classification Rule 5-3-2, enrollment lists are broken by using the previous classification cycle count.
- * *Note:* Classes 4A and 5A 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.

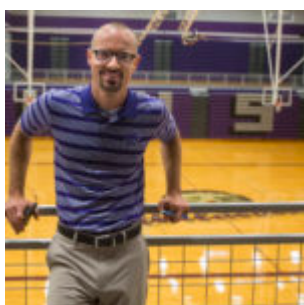
Colby , Goodland, Scott City and Haven all dropped from 4A to 3A schools, while McLouth moved up from 2A to 3A.



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.

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.”

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.

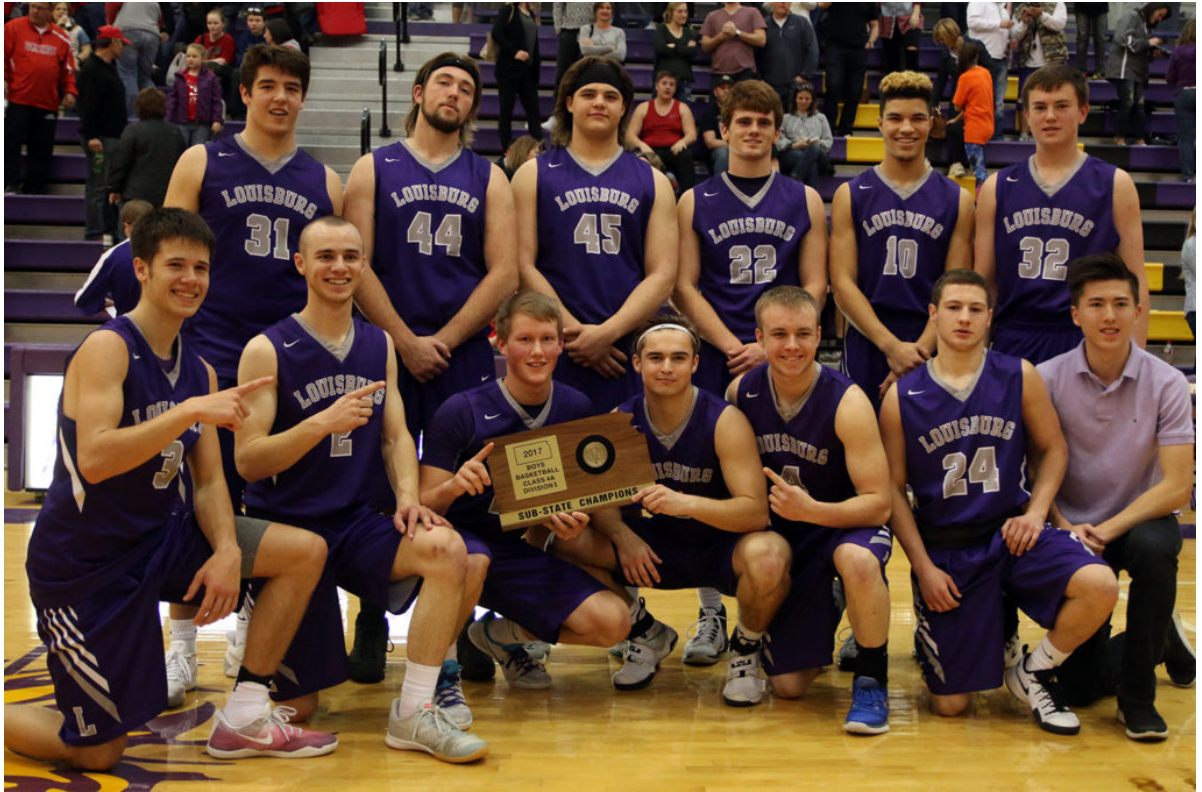
The Wildcats had a special year in several sports, and before we focus on the 2017-18 campaign, we should look back at what the 16-17 season brought us. Just take a look at what these Wildcats accomplished.

- 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.

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.”

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."

Lady Cats set tone for season at team camp



It may not have been the ending it wanted, but the Louisburg High School girls basketball program received the shot in the arm it was looking for.

The Lady Cats improved by seven wins last season off of their three-win campaign in 2015-16, despite the loss to Spring Hill in the first round of sub-state that ended their year.

The season itself created an excitement within the program and Louisburg head coach Shawn Lowry wanted his team to continue to build on that momentum last week when they held their team camp.

Lowry had 36 high school girls participate in the five sessions last week and had 103 campers overall from first through 12th grade.

"We had a very good week of camps at all levels," Lowry said. "Our seniors did a great job of setting the tone for us with great energy, effort and leadership. The juniors and sophomores were very strong in their work, they competed for everything and are making some big strides in their development. I was impressed with the incoming freshmen group's work ethic and their willingness to learn and compete."

Although, the team improved a year ago, the Lady Cats will have a different look to them in 2017-18 as they try to replace the 5-member senior class that all played crucial minutes.

Incoming seniors Isabelle Holtzen, Mikayla Quinn, Haven Trageser-Turner, Lexie Reece and Ryan Caldwell are taking on the leadership role. Although they might not look the same on the court as last year, Lowry knows different players will step up and improve throughout the year.

"Although we graduated a great group of seniors, we have many girls returning that gained some good experience last season," Lowry said. "As a part of that process, they know what kind of effort they will be asked to give, what kind of teammate they must be and that they have more confidence in themselves and

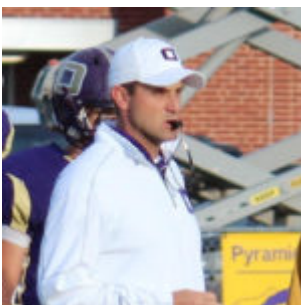
each other.”

Even though the team camp is complete, the work is just beginning for the Lady Cat players and coaches. They will be hitting the weight room three times a week during the summer and will have a chance to participate in open gyms.

“Team camp is primarily about shaping our team’s identity through our work and competition during the week,” Lowry said. “Through the process, the girls learn about each other and they start to build trust in and respect for each other. It’s also about establishing a culture, a mentality with this group to compete and battle for everything.

“The girls understand the importance of their commitment to getting stronger and improving their fundamental skills this offseason.”

Pfannenstiel ready to lead Wildcat boys basketball



Ty Pfannenstiel has been hired to take over the Louisburg High School boys basketball program. Pfannenstiel, who was previously the athletic director, head football coach and head girls basketball coach at Oakley High School, will also serve as Louisburg’s strength coach.

Coming off its first state tournament appearance in 12 years, the Louisburg High School boys basketball team had to find a new leader for the program, following the resignation of former coach Jason Nelson.

The Wildcats came across a good fit during their coaching search.

Louisburg hired Ty Pfannenstiel to take over the Wildcat team for the upcoming season. Pfannenstiel has experience in several different sports. He had different coaching jobs during his time at Oakley and Gardner-Edgerton high schools and is looking forward to working with the Wildcat players.

"I'm extremely excited about taking over the boys program," Pfannenstiel said. "From my days of teaching and coaching at Gardner Edgerton High School, I've always had a lot of respect for Louisburg High School and their sports teams. This is a community that has high expectations, and that is exactly what I was looking for."

Pfannenstiel has been at Oakley High School since 2014 and was the school's athletic director. He was also the head football, head girls basketball and assistant track coach.

He came to Oakley from Gardner-Edgerton, where he taught and coached at the school from 2005 to 2014. During his time with the Blazers, he was an assistant football, boys basketball and baseball coach.

Although Pfannenstiel has his own ideas on what he wants to implement into the Wildcat program, he knows the players are going to have to buy in to the team concept first.

"The two most important things I will expect of my players is commitment and character," Pfannenstiel said. "I want kids in my program that are committed to their teammates and

committed to making themselves a better player. If they make a commitment and work hard...good things will happen.

“And more importantly than that, I want good character kids in my program. I want kids that are going to be the leaders and role models for our school. We plan on winning lots of basketball games at Louisburg, but I’m much more concerned with these kids being successful in their life outside of basketball.”

Pfannenstiel will get a chance to work with his team starting this month, including during the team camp beginning on June 19.

“As for our system, we will try to play an exciting brand of basketball...hard-nosed defense with an up tempo offense,” he said. “I’m excited about getting started with our players this summer and seeing the makeup of our team.”

Along with his job as head boys basketball coach. Pfannenstiel will also be the head strength and conditioning coach for Louisburg High School and he knows that getting better on the court starts in the weight room.

“The weight room is going to be an integral part of developing our program,” he said. “I don’t think there’s any coach out there that wouldn’t want his/her athletes to be as strong and explosive as possible. That will be our goal in the weight room at Louisburg High – develop strong and explosive athletes. I can’t wait to start working with all of the Louisburg athletes in the weight room.”

Harding signs to play basketball at Hesston College



Louisburg High School senior Grant Harding signed his letter of intent on May 2 to play basketball at Hesston College. Sitting next to Grant are his parents Dotty and Ken Harding. Standing (from left) is former Louisburg head coach Jason Nelson, brother and assistant coach Drew Harding and Hesston coach Dustin Galyon.

It has been quite a year for Grant Harding.

The Louisburg High School senior helped the Wildcat basketball team to their first state tournament in 12 years, he led them in scoring and rebounding and was rewarded for those accomplishments with first team all-Frontier League honors.

Now Harding is ready to take the next step in achieving a dream.

On May 2, Harding signed his letter of intent in front of family and friends at LHS to play basketball at Hesston College.

"I am very excited to play basketball at the next level," Harding said. "(Hesston) has been talking to me since December and called me during Christmas break for the first time. They have always seemed like a good option to me and the Hesston program is a very respectable program and a very good team. I

am very excited to finally know where I am going next year.”

Hesston College, which is two-year school located in Hesston, Kan., has had a successful men’s basketball program in recent years, including two years ago when the Larks earned a spot in the junior college national tournament in 2015.

Hesston Coach Dustin Galyon hopes Harding can be one of the pieces that can help get the Larks back on the national stage in the near future.

“I am super excited to have Grant be a part of the Hesston College basketball family,” Galyon said. “We are excited for the role he will play on our team – a team that has been nationally ranked three out of the last five years.

“We think Grant can be an impact guy for us as a freshman and that is saying a lot. There is a great responsibility that comes with that. We think his best basketball is ahead of him. After watching him play, working him out and talking with coach (Jason Nelson), we think he has the chance to be a full-ride kid at the Division II level or higher after he is done with us.”

Playing at a high level has always been a goal for Harding, but he also wanted to get a chance to play right away. Harding feels Hesston helps him in both regards.



Grant Harding, who averaged 17 points a game for the Wildcats, is excited about the opportunity to play at Hesston.

"It is even more exciting to know that after the first two years, I will still have plenty of opportunities to play college ball somewhere – maybe even more than what I had this time around," Harding said. "Through high school, I have always played three sports, but it is exciting to only play basketball for the next couple years and get better at basketball and staying in basketball shape. It has always been a big adjustment from sport to sport every year."

Harding, who averaged 17 points and eight rebounds a game for the Wildcats last season, had a few options to play at the college level, but it was Hesston that stood out following his official visit to the school.

"When I went for my visit, I met all the players and they all seemed like great guys," Harding said. "I had a chance to sit down with all of them and they are all extremely nice. A lot of them are very talented. Coach is a great guy and I know he cares for his players and he has won a lot of games. The whole thing seemed to plan out like I wanted it to do."

Harding is also ready to take the next step in the academic world as well. While in college, Harding plans to major in secondary education with an emphasis in history.

"Hesston is not just a great fit for him from a basketball perspective, I think it is a great fit off the floor as well," Galyon said. "He will receive a private education and transfer to anywhere in the country. Hesston is not the typical 2-year school as we have kids from 35 states and 19 countries. He fits the academic piece to that as well and we are a Christian college."

"Grant is going to be challenged on the basketball floor, he is going to be challenged in the classroom, and he is going to be challenged as a young man in his faith. We are seriously excited to have him a part of our program."