

Carlson's golden goal lifts Louisburg past Baldwin



Louisburg senior Treston Carlson (12) is surrounded by his teammates after scoring the game-winning goal in overtime in the Wildcats' 1-0 victory over Baldwin.

Coming off a nearly two week layoff, the Louisburg boys soccer team got a chance to host one of the top teams in the Frontier League and did so without much practice.

The Wildcats squared off with Baldwin on Monday in hopes of keep their undefeated season alive. Both teams had their chances on goal and it ended up taking extra time to decide the winner.

Luckily for Louisburg, senior Treston Carlson was in the right place at the right time.

Senior Logan Faulkner sent a pass near the goal and Carlson's foot was there to tap it in and give the Wildcats a 1-0 win over the Bulldogs at the Wildcat Sports Complex.

"It wasn't the prettiest, but a goal is a goal," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "Treston is kind of a junkyard dog and will clean up the mess a little bit. I was getting mad at him for carrying the ball so much instead of giving it up and keep moving. They kept sending two guys at him all the time and then he did something like that to totally redeem himself. I was really happy for the boys to see them pull it out and get a win."

After a slow start to the match, Louisburg started taking shots on goal, but either the Wildcats missed open looks or were denied by the Baldwin goalkeeper.

Carlson, Cade Gassman, Braden Yows and Colin McManigal all had shots on goal, but were unlucky until the Wildcats hit overtime.



Louisburg junior Hunter Rogers heads the ball away from a Baldwin player Monday in Louisburg.

"It is really tough to play a team like this when you come back (off quarantine) with two practices and a game," Conley said. "They do a lot of things to you and Baldwin plays so fast and so hard. We struggled to match that intensity at first, but after the first 10 minutes, I think we had the better of play. We had way more chances than they did, and I don't know how many times we were inside the 6 and just

couldn't bury it.

"The frustration started to mount a little bit and we were just trying to keep everyone positive and to stay with it. Baldwin just does a lot of things to frustrate you. They play so direct and so aggressive that it makes it tough to play our game a little bit. We had moments where we were really, really good and there were moments that we were really bad too. Our marking up in the back was pretty rough, but we are just going to get back to work."

Louisburg's defense also came up big late in the match. With five minutes remaining in regulation, the Bulldogs took a shot that appeared it was going to find the corner of the net, but sophomore goalie Mack Newell made a diving finger-tip save to knock it away.



Louisburg defender Toby Espina-Roca slides in to knock the

ball away from a Baldwin player Monday in Louisburg.

It was a save that allowed the golden goal from Carlson and kept the Wildcats perfect on the young season.

"I think the kids did a good job," Conley said. "Our fitness isn't where it needs to be after we took 10 days off, so we are trying to get back fit and it is one of those things. This is a really good rivalry and I think we always have good games when we come together. It would have been nice if we would have finished a few more of our chances, and I am sure Baldwin feels the same way.

"We are playing hard and not taking anything for granted because we don't know what tomorrow is going to look like. We are playing like there is no tomorrow and we are just going to keep grinding and keep pushing."

Louisburg blanks Paola to win fifth straight

In what was its third game in five days, Louisburg hosted rival Paola on Tuesday and the Wildcats did more than enough to get past the Panthers.

Twenty-one players saw minutes for the Wildcats and five different players scored goals in a 6-0 rout of Paola at the Wildcat Sports Complex.

"It was an up and down game for us," Conley said. "I felt we did not play the greatest and we didn't play with much energy. To be honest, we were flat and we struggled to execute like we usually do. I do feel that we did do some nice things, but we were not as consistent as I would have liked.

"We were able to get all 21 kids into the game and rest some legs and also allow those other young men to gain some experience. We were also able to give some of our hurt kids an extra day of rest and healing. We will have our fourth game in six days against Ottawa and fatigue will be a factor."

Sophomore Cade Gassman got the Wildcats on the board with two goals in the first 10 minutes to give them an early lead. Junior Braden Yows added another score and Louisburg had a 3-0 lead at halftime.

The Wildcats controlled possession throughout and they were able to tack on more scores in the second half. Sophomore Colin McManigal and senior Treston Carlson each found the back of the net to go up five.

With seconds left in the match, senior Dylan Armstrong sealed the win with his first goal of the season.

Louisburg will try to remain undefeated tonight against Ottawa at home as the Wildcats try for their sixth straight win.

Week 3 Athlete of the Week: Logan Faulkner



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week three of the fall sports season, sponsored by Dr. Laura's Orthodontics.

LOGAN FAULKNER, SENIOR, BOYS SOCCER

Louisburg senior Logan Faulkner had a memorable day during the Wildcats' 8-2 victory over Bonner Springs last Saturday. In

just 45 minutes of action, the Wildcat midfielder recorded a hat trick with a pair of first half goals and then completed the trifecta with a penalty kick in the second. It was also the Wildcats' first game back after having a nearly two week layoff.

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

Previous winners:

Week 1: Weston Guetterman

Week 2: Lola Edwards



Whether your child needs 1 set or 2 sets of braces you never pay twice at our office




Orthodontics, TMJ and Sleep Apnea Treatment

Comfortable dental care for the entire family. No shots, no drills, no pain
We offer sedation dentistry for high anxiety patients



5321 W 151st St, Leawood, KS 66224 (913)851-9969
1270 W Amity, Louisburg, KS 66053 (913)837-3096

Follow us on Facebook for special contests and discounts 

Wildcats return after long layoff to roll Bonner Springs



Louisburg sophomore Colin McManigal races toward the goal Saturday during the Wildcats' game against Bonner Springs.

After having to sit out for almost two weeks due to a quarantine for a positive COVID-19 result, the Louisburg boys soccer team was back in action Saturday.

The Wildcats hosted Bonner Springs and didn't seem to show much rust from that layoff. Louisburg scored five first half goals on its way to an 8-2 rout of the Braves to move the Wildcats' record to 3-0 on the season.

The team was eligible to return to practice Thursday and had just two days to prepare for Bonner Springs, but the Wildcats picked up right where they left off.

"It was fantastic to have the boys back and for them to come out and play like they did was really well done," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "I think we did a fantastic job setting the tone early and capitalized on a lot of our early opportunities."

Louisburg dominated possession and never let up as the Wildcats took 30 shots in the game, compared to just seven for Bonner Springs.

Three of those goals came thanks to the foot of senior Logan Faulkner, who recorded the hat trick, with his final one coming on a penalty kick in the second half.

“Logan made the most of every opportunity,” Conley said. “He played hard and made great runs to make sure he was in the right spot at the right time. I was really proud of his effort and how well he played.”

Junior midfielder Braden Yows was also a big part of the Wildcat attack as he finished with three assists and senior forward Treston Carlson had two goals and an assist.



Louisburg sophomore Cade Gassman puts on a shot on goal Saturday during the Wildcats' game against Bonner Springs. Photo courtesy of Linda Ptacek.

Sophomores Ethan Ptacek, Cade Gassman and Colin McManigal also scored for Louisburg, while junior Isaac Guetterman finished

with two assists and Ptacek added another.

"I felt the boys played really, really well," Conley said. "We possessed the majority of the game and did a very nice job executing our scouting report. I like how aggressive we played and how we took what they gave us. The boys played with a lot of emotion and played for each other. It was really good to see."

Carlson and Faulkner opened with back-to-back goals to give the Wildcats a 2-0 lead and the scoring continued. McManigal, Faulkner and Gassman each followed it up to give Louisburg a 5-0 advantage at halftime and it never gave it back.

Faulkner converted a penalty kick to begin the second half to put Louisburg up six, and after a Bonner Springs goal, Ptacek found the back of the net to put the Wildcats up 7-1.

Bonner Springs would answer with another goal before Carlson sealed the victory late in the contest with another score.

"I felt we did a nice job all over the field," Conley said. "We got on them early and didn't let up in terms of how we played, regardless who was in the game. It is also really nice to be able to play 22 different guys. I love how much this team has bought into what we are doing and trying to make sure we play to our standard."

It is the start of a busy week for the Wildcats as this was their first of four games that are to be played over a span of six days. Louisburg will host Baldwin today and Paola on Wednesday in a varsity only contest. The Wildcats will finish it up Thursday in a home game against Ottawa.

Wildcats stay unbeaten with win on Senior Night



Louisburg seniors (front row, from left) Emma Christy (manager), Weston Frank, Logan Faulkner, Treston Carlson; (back row) Reece Jones, Dylan Armstrong, Caleb Shaughnessy, Dacey Wieland, Luke Faulkner and Haden Yeager were honored prior to their Senior Night match Thursday.

It wasn't the perfect match, in fact after it was all over, Louisburg head coach Kyle Conley had a list of things to work on for the upcoming practices.

Still, Thursday's home opener against Basehor-Linwood was special in more ways than one. Not only did the Wildcats pull out a 2-0 win over the Bobcats, they did so in front of dozens of fans despite limitations set forth to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Even better, Louisburg was able to honor their seniors in the proper way as the school moved up Senior Night to its first home match of the season. Weston Frank, Logan Faulkner, Treston Carlson, Reece Jones, Dylan Armstrong, Caleb Shaughnessy, Dacey Wieland, Ethan Showalter, Luke Faulkner, Haden Yeager and manager Emma Christy were all recognized with their parents prior to the match.

Also, all of the seniors in attendance found their way into the starting lineup and made a difference in a Louisburg win that moved the Wildcats to 2-0 on the season.

"It is tough to get minutes with a team of 40 kids," Conley said. "We kept everyone because we thought it would be important with COVID and everything. It was good to get those all those seniors some reps and have them run around out there a little bit. They played hard and they can hold their heads high."



Senior Haden Yeager wins a 50-50 ball Thursday during the Wildcats' match with Basehor-Linwood.

"They have done everything that I have asked of them. It is hard to get kids minutes that all deserve it. I know some kids have got shafted because there are so many out. At the same time, it is about being a good leader and playing for your teammates and I think all of these seniors play an important role on this team in one way or another."

It was a physical contest throughout as both teams had chances

on goal, but Louisburg was able to control possession, which turned into more opportunities.

Louisburg put its first shot away midway through the first half when junior Braden Yows threw in from the side, toward the goal. The ball found the foot of Carlson, who tapped it past the Basehor goalie to put the Wildcats up one.

About 10 minutes later, the Wildcats added an insurance goal as Yeager moved up from his midfield spot for a scrum in front of the goal and found the back of the net to give Louisburg a little breathing room.

Although the Wildcats had enough goals to pull away, they also missed their fair share of chances, which Conley hopes can get corrected in practice.

"We had so many good chances, we just weren't able to get many to go in," Conley said. "In the final third, we were just not very good. We spent most of the day in practice (Wednesday) finishing in the final third and unfortunately it didn't look like it. Still, it was great to see Treston and Haden put one away. We are just going to continue to work and we will get better."



Sophomore goalie Mack Newell makes a save Thursday during the Wildcats' win against Basehor at home.

The Wildcats were also able to turn away several Bobcats chances, thanks in part to goalie Mack Newell. The Louisburg sophomore made several big saves throughout the course of the match, including two in the second half, and recorded his first-ever shutout.

"Mack has worked his butt off all summer long," Conley said. "When we have practice he has been working hard, when we haven't had practice he has continued to work. He is a student of the game. He is still learning and still asking questions. He did a great job and he is a shot stopper. He sees the ball well and has really good hands. I'm really proud of him."

LHS soccer team to quarantine after player tests positive for COVID-19



A member of the Louisburg High School boys soccer team has tested positive for COVID-19, the school announced in an e-mail today.

After discussion with the Miami County Health Department, they have determined by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment guidelines that the entire team, both varsity and junior varsity, will have to quarantine until Sept. 16.

“It is an unfortunate situation,” LHS activities director Michael Pickman said. “Once we were informed of the positive test, I reported it to the health department and we went from there. We are definitely hoping for a full recovery of the person involved.”

According to Pickman, the school was informed that a player was coming down with symptoms last Thursday and was in the process of getting tested. The parents then informed Pickman on Saturday of the positive test result.

Pickman then contacted the Miami County Health Department shortly after he received the news. The health department called on Monday to gather information and word came down late

in the day Tuesday.

Due to the fact that the infected player practiced with the entire team last Wednesday, it led to the quarantine of all 40 players. In practice and games, players do not wear masks, except when they are not participating or doing a light workout.

The KDHE recommendation indicated that as a result of practice Wednesday, and exposure to “droplets” being possible regardless of proximity or time, all players needed to be quarantined.

Members of the team will be able to return to school and practice on Sept. 17. It means today’s match with Basehor-Linwood, Thursday’s game with Bonner Springs and the Wildcats’ Sept. 15 matchup with Paola have all been postponed.

Louisburg was also scheduled to play Lansing on Sept 14, but that game has been cancelled.

The Wildcats started their season with wins over Fort Scott and Basehor-Linwood.

“We are going to reschedule as many of these games as we can,” Pickman said. “Obviously we are probably going to lose a game or two because of this, but hopefully we will be able to have close to a full season.”

Wildcats overcome slow start to win season opener going

away



Sophomore Colin McManigal scored two goals late in the first half to give the Wildcats some momentum Tuesday against Fort Scott.

FORT SCOTT- Through the first 30 minutes of Louisburg's season opener against Fort Scott, Wildcat coach Kyle Conley didn't recognize what he was watching.

It wasn't the same team that he had been accustomed to seeing at practice the last several weeks. Fort Scott took an early first half lead and the Wildcats all of sudden found themselves behind.

The Tigers' lead didn't last long as Louisburg scored eight unanswered goals, including six in the second half, to pull away for a comfortable 8-2 win over Fort Scott on Tuesday at Ellis Park.

"We had a nice conversation at halftime and the boys responded," Conley said. "We came out and pressed and played a lot quicker. The boys stepped up and created havoc. To be honest, I was expecting us to start the game that way. The second half, we just did a much better job of finishing our opportunities."

Ten minutes into the contest, the Tigers took the one-goal lead despite the Wildcats having numerous chances on goal. In the game, Louisburg took 41 shots, 22 of which were on goal.

Late in the first half, it was sophomore Colin McManigal who

got the Wildcats the momentum back as he scored back-to-back goals in the final five minutes, including one on an assist from sophomore Ethan Ptacek, to put Louisburg up 2-1 at halftime.

"The first 15 minutes of the game was wide open and we struggled to stay onside and to finish a ridiculous amount of breakaways," Conley said. "The thing we need to remember is that we have 25 underclassmen on our team. Expectations are hard to live up to at times with young teams. It showed us we have a lot to improve and work out, but we also did some really good things with a scrappy, physical team like Fort Scott."

The flood gates opened in the second half as senior Treston Carlson scored in the first 20 seconds and then followed it up with an assist to sophomore Cade Gassman as he made it 4-1. Gassman then sent a kick from the corner toward the goal and junior Hunter Rogers headed it in to extend the Wildcat lead.

Eight minutes into second half, junior Braden Yows scored on a penalty kick and then Yows assisted Carlson on a pass from the corner to make it 7-1. Gassman widened the lead even more with his second goal of the game and sealed the win for the Wildcats.

Although the Tigers were able to score twice, they didn't get many opportunities against the Wildcat defense as the back line of Rogers, Toby-Espina Roca, Luke Faulkner and Michael Seufferling limited shots and goalie Mack Newell recorded a save in his first varsity match.

"The boys did fine," Conley said of his defense. "They worked really hard and communicated really well. I would like to see them mark tighter and be more aggressive with balls in the air. Fort Scott plays different than most teams that we play, but it should give us things we need to work on."

Louisburg will try and make it two in a row tonight when it

hosts Basehor-Linwood in its home opener. It is also Senior Night for the Wildcats and the match will begin at approximately 6 p.m.

Wildcat soccer has eyes on state final four



Senior Treston Carlson (12) is one of several returning scorers for the Louisburg boys soccer team this season as the Wildcats bring back 91 percent of their scoring from a year ago.

The Louisburg boys soccer team had one of the most successful seasons in program history a year ago when the Wildcats captured a Frontier League crown, a regional title and set a program record with 16 wins.

Still, after it was all over, there was a feeling of disappointment on how it all ended.

The Wildcats lost to the eventual state champion, Bishop Miege, in the state quarterfinals and saw their goal of making it to the state final four come up just one win short. That day has fueled the fire for many around the Louisburg program and they want to take that next step forward.

“A year ago, this group went 16-2-1 which was arguably the

greatest seasons in Louisburg soccer history, but that was last year," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We are focusing on this season and getting back to improving this year's team. The boys are picking things up quickly and it's allowing us to advance faster in regards to implementing more advanced technical aspects. This group is going to be very special."

A big reason for some of the excitement around the program is the Wildcats return 15 letter-winners from a season ago, including 10 who saw time in the starting role at some point and time.

Between varsity and junior varsity, the Wildcats have 40 players on the roster, including 10 seniors. Even with that, Louisburg has a very young group that includes a 19-member sophomore class.

Since the Wildcats have so many returning players on the roster, it has helped them weather the COVID-19 pandemic that forced restrictions on teams throughout the summer, along with taking extra precautions during the season.

"Practices have been going really well," Conley said. "The boys are doing a great job dealing with adversities well and are really focused on their goals. Overall, we are still a young team, but for a young team we have extremely high goals. I think the best strength that this team may have is our depth at every position.

"The team is very determined and focused for this season. Covid is what it is and the boys will do whatever it takes to make sure their goals are achieved. They are spread out during water breaks by designated cones for each player, spraying with hand sanitizer, we are masking up during any down time, and we are refraining from unnecessary high fives or fist bumps. The boys are ready to show 4A what we are all about and that we are not just a fluke."

One of those strengths can easily be found on the attacking side of the field as the Wildcats feature speed in the middle of the field and up top.



Junior Braden Yows returns to lead the Wildcats this season after being named the Class 4-1A Co-Midfielder of the Year.

Junior Braden Yows, who was named as the Co-Midfielder of the Year by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association in 2019 and was a first-team all-league player, returns as a key cog in the Wildcats' attack. Yows had a big season as he finished the year with 11 goals, three of which were game-winners, and ended with a team-high 14 assists. He also had 44 shots on goal.

Sophomore Cade Gassman played just as big of a role in the Wildcats' success as he finished with a team-high 18 goals, including four game-winning scores, to go along with five assists from his forward position. Gassman, who also earned

first-team all-league and all-state honors a year ago, will give the Wildcats a nice 1-2 punch with Yows.

“Cade and Braden are extremely talented players,” Conley said. “These two provide a lot of attacking ability for us, but also a lot of versatility. Both of these young man have played a variety of positions for us this preseason and we will love to be creative in our lineups to maximize those two talented young men.”

In fact, the Wildcats return 91 percent of their scoring from a season ago and senior Treston Carlson will join Gassman and Yows as goal scoring threats. Carlson was a second-team all-league and all-state player in 2019 as a forward and finished the year with 12 goals and five assists.

Junior Jaden Vohs and sophomores Colin McManigal and Gavin York, will all see time at the forward spot throughout the season. Seniors Haden Yeager, Logan Faulkner, Dacey Wieland, Caleb Shaghnessy and Reece Jones, along with juniors Isaac Guetterman, Hunter Rogers and sophomore Ethan Ptacek, are all vying for playing time in the midifield.

“Attacking is going to be our strong suit this year,” Conley said. “In 2019, we scored 58 goals and had 35 assists. This team returns 91 percent of our scoring and 88 percent of our assists. I think we are going to be extremely dynamic up top and going to cause a lot of problems for teams. Treston has worked hard to get stronger and more dynamic this summer and it is showing.

“Once again, that was last year. On paper this team looks very impressive, but good on paper doesn’t mean a whole lot. That has been our message to the boys. Each game, we are going to step out with something to prove.”



Michael Seufferling (1) and Toby Espina-Roca (29) return as starters to help lead the Louisburg defense.

Louisburg lost a few key pieces from its defense from a year ago, but will still feature a lot of familiar faces. Gone is all-league and all-state goalie Garrett Rolofson, Co-Defensive Player of the Year in Ryan Haight and long time starter Will Frank.

Still, the Wildcats return several defenders who saw starting time a season ago, including outside back, Michael Seufferling. The Louisburg junior was a second-team all-league and all-state player last season.

Also returning are seniors Ethan Showalter, Luke Faulkner, Weston Frank, sophomore Toby Espina-Roca and freshman Austin Jamison. A pair of sophomores in Mack Newell and Matthew Sword are also competing for the starting goalie spot.

“Losing Ryan, Garrett and Will are going to be tough to replace, but Ryan and Will missed a lot of time with injuries last year and we had to play younger experienced players at those positions,” Conley said. “That helps a lot this year, because those young players were forced to step up and fill the void. Losing Rolo will hurt, but we have two really talented players battling to fill that position in Mack Newell and Matthew Sword. I think centerback is our weakness going into this season, but we spent our preseason looking to fill that position and the boys have been working hard.”

With their season opener at 4:30 p.m., Tuesday at Fort Scott, the Wildcats begin their journey for a spot in the state final four and are excited for what the season has in store.

“This group will have the same goals as the previous teams I have coached here,” Conley said. “They are wanting to win more than 10 games in the regular season, compete for a Frontier League title, win a regional championship and make a 4A-1A State Final Four. This senior class has won two Frontier League Titles and two Regional Championships. They are hungry to add to that and they want more.”

Frontier League announces policy to limit fan attendance



Student crowds like this one will be hard to come by for the 2020 season as the Frontier League announced a plan to limit attendance.

Crowds at Frontier League athletic events will look different for the 2020 fall season.

They will also look a lot smaller, too.

On Sunday evening, the Frontier League announced the member schools will be limiting crowd size to allow social distancing and safety at facility-based events due to the spread of COVID-19 in the area.

The plan features several guidelines, but the biggest announced is that four league tickets will be created for volleyball, soccer, football, and cheerleaders rostered to play/perform that night. Tickets are good for Frontier League home and away games.

Coaches will receive two tickets and those numbers could go down if dictated by the host school's county health department.

Member schools in the Frontier League include Louisburg, Paola, Ottawa, Eudora, Baldwin, Spring Hill, Tonganoxie, Piper and Bonner Springs. Piper and Bonner Springs are forced to play every game of their season on the road as the Wyandotte County Health Department prohibited non-professional sporting events to be conducted at this time.

The new rule will also make it harder for students to come support their classmates, as well as town members that don't

have an immediate family member participating.

"Depending on the facility capacity, home or away, the amount of tickets available for that contest may be reduced," Louisburg activities director Michael Pickman said. "The athletic director will work with coaches to communicate the available number of tickets for each contest. We will be looking at expanding seating at events to grassy areas where safe, allowed, and possible, so we encourage people to bring lawn chairs or blankets. Designated home and away sections will be identified and utilized.

"We understand that this will affect the student and patron opportunities to attend games, but the ability to provide an environment where social distancing can occur can only be achieved through limiting capacity. We will be live streaming as many home events as possible in lieu of this fact."

Each rostered athlete and manager will be given four laminated tickets. These tickets will then be given out to the fans the student chooses. To enter a game a fan must have this ticket to present to the ticket taker and that student must be rostered for that contest. Admission, if applicable for the contest, will be charged at that time.

If the contest is a home event and the fan has a valid activities pass, this will count for admission, but the student ticket must still be presented. Schools have the authority to decrease the number of tickets as it relates to their county guidelines and facility space.

Four league tickets will be created for dance and band members for home events. These tickets can be used at home events only. These numbers could be less if dictated by the host school's county health department.

Each gate will have a detailed roster for both teams. Any players not rostered for that night's event will not be allowed to have spectators enter the stadium. League passes

are only for administration and school board at the current time.

According to Pickman, appropriate face coverings are required by all in attendance for indoor events, as well as social distancing from those who do not reside in the same household.

At outdoor events, fans should socially distance from those who do not reside in the same household and appropriate face coverings are required to enter, at concessions stands, at restrooms, and anytime you cannot socially distance. While the league encourages masks at all times, fans may remove their face coverings once proper social distancing of six feet from all people not residing in the same home occurs and is maintained.

For Louisburg, the threat of not being able to complete their season forced many of the programs to move up their Senior Night games to their first home contest of the season.

The Lady Cat volleyball team will host Senior Night on Sept. 1, and the boys soccer team will take place on Sept. 3. Football, dance, cheer and band Senior Night will be held on Sept. 4.

LHS fall sports practices underway with precautions



With the cloud of a different looking fall season hanging over their heads, the Louisburg High School fall sports teams officially got back to work Monday for the first day of practice.

The possibility of having a shortened fall season due to the COVID-19 pandemic hasn't scared off Wildcat athletes from giving this season a go and making the most of it.

All four teams saw good numbers on the first day of practice as it was business as usual for many of those squads.

In all, Louisburg saw a total of 181 athletes come out for sports at the high school level. Those numbers will drop when volleyball and boys soccer makes their cuts, but it shows the athletes aren't afraid of what lies ahead and are excited to get their season going.

For the Louisburg football team, Wildcat coach Robert Ebenstein has 70 players out this season after the Wildcats finished last year with a 6-4 record and spot in the regional playoffs.

Practice has been similar than in year's past, even with COVID-19, however the players and coaches are doing their part to stay as healthy as possible. That includes players bringing their own water bottles to practice and coaches instructing with face coverings.

"The kids and coaches were very excited to get back to it," Ebenstein said. "We have a very young group and it was good to see them get out on the field and compete."

"We are following all the guidelines passed down from KSHSAA, the county and general guidelines from our school administration. The kids have done an amazing job buying in and doing what we have to do to ensure we get our opportunity to play this season."



On the volleyball court, the Lady Cats came together to try and put together another strong season. Louisburg finished last year with a spot in the state tournament and took fourth overall.

When practice began, Louisburg had 38 athletes out for volleyball and the Lady Cats will try and continue to work off what they have done over summer as they try and make it back to the state tournament. Practices have looked a little different than in year's past as players and coaches are wearing face masks at all times, unless certain physical activities are taking place.

"I think the first few days have gone well," Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment said. "We have a set of

volleyball skill drills and physical tests that each athlete completes as part of the tryout process. Like every year, they are excited to get the season started. I'm sure there are different emotions because there are some unknowns. We are preparing to compete for the entire season but know there is the possibility it could be cut short or we could see adjustments to our schedules that are out of our control. We had 35 athletes, split among three teams, participate this summer in a league ran out of Olathe. Playing for six weeks over summer gave us an idea of what the season could look like and how we can adapt to the new guidelines that have been put in place.

"We are still practicing social distancing so we've adapted some of our drills to accommodate for that while also creating a competitive environment. We are encouraged to work in smaller groups when possible as well. As the season progresses, we'll see the biggest changes come when we have a match because some pre-game protocol has changed as well as structure during a match. For instance, teams will not switch benches at the conclusion of a set."



The Louisburg boys soccer team is coming off one of its best season's in program history as the Wildcats reeled off 16 wins a year ago and won a regional title. Louisburg returns several starters from last season and the Wildcats currently have 43 players out.

Along with football, soccer is considered a close-contact sport and the Wildcats are doing everything they can to keep themselves – and others – healthy throughout the year.

"The first day of practice was a typical first day," Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. "We were a little rusty, but we got through it. The boys are incredibly grateful for the ability to play the game they love. The boys have some massive goals this year and understand what it is going to take to obtain them.

"We made the kids have their masks on during breaks and their own water bottle. This will hopefully limit the chance of COVID spreading."

The one sport that probably won't see too much change this season is cross country. The Wildcat runners are coming off a season in which they had a runner – Trinity Moore – take third at state and watched as the girls' team qualified for state for the third year in a row.



Louisburg still has high goals on both the girls and boys side and the Wildcats have 30 athletes out this season. Thanks to a successful summer of running workouts, Louisburg is ready to get its season underway.

"We are always excited to get started," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "This year is not much different because we had a great season last year and the returners are very focused on improving over last year. Once summer running got started, a sense of normalcy crept in and we started getting ready for the season. They were excited to be with friends again.

"Not much has changed for us since there is not 'contact' during our races. The only thing that could change is how races are started to reduce numbers and losing meets due to a

large number of schools participating. We are already scrambling to get a first meet in this year. We will make it happen for the kids.”

LHS coaches thankful, excited about KSHSAA ruling on fall sports



Coaches, parents and athletes held their collective breath last week during the Kansas High School Activities Association’s executive board meeting.

People around the state watched to see what KSHSAA would recommend for fall sports during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Back to school will be different than normal, and for some, will start after Labor Day due to a high number of positive cases.

Still, many have wondered what was going to happen to fall activities around the state and they got their answer. A motion by KSHSAA failed 5-4 in the executive board session, which in turn allowed the fall sports season to continue as scheduled.

“I am relieved that we know a definite start date and there will be no changes to the start of games,” Louisburg High

School activities director Michael Pickman said. "The kids and coaches worked all summer, and I didn't want to see that start date delayed and lose that progress. However, there will be some changes due to the pandemic so the focus turns to safety. The last thing I want is for the athletic events and protocols to create the spread of COVID that affects the academic side, so it will be very important that we take the recommendations of the health organizations and KSHSAA to make the athletics and competitions as safe as possible for this year."

During the meeting, KSHSAA had proposed keeping the original start of practice date of Aug. 17 for all activities. For activities being able to allow social distancing and minimal contact, such as girls golf, girls tennis, cross country, debate and scholars bowl, no modifications were recommended.

However, the proposal called for moving the start dates for competition in football, volleyball and boys soccer to begin no earlier than Sept. 8 – which basically took a week of their season.

It would have made football an eight game season, instead of the normal nine. For soccer, number of games would have been reduced from 16 to 14 and volleyball would have been reduced from 36-30 points.

For many of the Wildcat head coaches, the vote of the executive board was a breath of fresh air in what has been a challenging spring and summer for local athletes.

"I really think it was a good decision," Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein said. "The kids deserve a chance to be able to play their season. It could be different than we have seen before, but I think we have done a good job of keeping the exposure down. They deserve this opportunity and activities like football will keep kids focused on school as well. I believe it is something they need."

"It was also good decision for the whole state. Yes, we are close to the metro, but you have schools like Smith Center or somewhere else in the state where the exposure is low. Starting the season on time was the right thing to do, and if there are cancellations, it gives schools an opportunity to reschedule if they need to."

Louisburg's boys soccer program is looking to have another big season as it tries to repeat as a Frontier League champion and their 16 wins from a year ago. Although, the Wildcats are looking forward to getting their season underway, they realize things could change on a daily basis.

"I was extremely excited," Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. "There were so many rumors and recommendations that were flying I was worried. The vote at least gives this group an opportunity to actually get some games in. This gives the boys soccer team a chance to back up the season they had a year ago. I am excited to see us at least get a chance to start the season."

"I will be honest, I was extremely worried over the summer. In fact, a comment was made in the KSHSAA executive board meeting that still has me worried. They said let's start the season as soon as possible, because we are not sure how long it is going to last. It will also be interesting to see if the CDC or local health departments change their protocols when someone may have it, otherwise teams will be shut down right and left because they might have the virus."

Cross country is a sport that considered somewhat safe when it comes to the spread of COVID-19. Louisburg head coach John Reece has treated this summer like normal.

Reece had 35 runners out for the first day of their daily morning runs, and have averaged 20 a day since then. It is considered a "socially-distanced" sport, and one that KSHSAA had no problems with starting their schedule on time.

"Very excited for our seniors to have a fall season," Reece said. "I'm not gonna hold my breath as who knows what could happen in a month. For now it is go time, and we will be ready."

"We have been able to transition into some workouts on Wednesdays to get some quality work in. The rest of the time we are running this town and getting in the miles. It is going to be another fun year for both boys and girls teams. We want to get both to state and we will work hard to accomplish this goal."

Volleyball is the one indoor sport in the fall, which has some worried about how social distancing will work in the gym and how many teams will be invited to tournaments. As for now, nothing has changed in that department, and head coach Jessica Compliment is looking forward to working with her team in a couple weeks.

"It's nice to know what the season is going to look like," Compliment said. "The uncertainty and the unknowns for the upcoming school has been a little unnerving, but I am happy to see that the players will have a season."

"I do not know of any changes to our schedule as of right now. I have been told the schedule will go as scheduled until we hear differently. I have not heard from tournament host schools on whether or not they plan to change anything."

As far as spectators go, there has not been a limit set as of yet as members of the school district are working on protocols to use during the season. For now, the obvious guidelines are the ones people experience on a daily basis.

"There will be guidelines more than restrictions as related to Covid-19 safe practices that align with each sport and specific to that sport," Pickman said. "Universal aspects like wearing masks to practice and during periods of inactivity will apply to all. Cleaning equipment schedules and protocols

to have water bottles and cease use of water fountains, etc, along with others are sport specific guidelines for both practice and game day. These documents are being drafted and will be communicated once final.

"We are following the Executive Order 20-59, so if the event is outside, there will not be masks required, but we will still encourage social distancing. If the event is inside, masks will be required as well as social distancing encouraged."

The district has had to make one change to the start of the fall season and that is the cancellation of the Fall Sports Pep Rally that has annually been held at the high school.

"The Community Pep Rally was a hard decision because it is a great school and community business partnership that the community and our coaches, players, and students look forward to, but it was more important to avoid these extra opportunities for mass gathering to place focus on opening school and activities on time and healthy as possible," Pickman said. "We are looking to reschedule possibly during the buffer week at the conclusion of the fall season. No other events have been cancelled at this time."