Top 10 Stories of 2018



It was a successful, and eventful, 2018 for Louisburg High School athletics and for those who are connected to the Wildcat program. This past year created a lot of school history for LHS and several programs brought back state hardware to Louisburg.

Below are the Top 10 stories from 2018, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the explanation is the link to the actual story from the event.

This year was a blast to cover and I was blessed to have the opportunity to go along for the ride with many of these. As much fun as it was, I can't wait for 2019 to begin. Looking forward to it!



10. Dillon medals at state golf for second straight year

EMPORIA - All season,

Calvin Dillon had been atop or near the front of leaderboard and that didn't

change in what was his biggest tournament of the season.

The Louisburg High School sophomore went up against the state's best during the Class 4A state golf tournament on May 19 at the Emporia Municipal Course and did more than old his own. Dillon earned a state medal as he finished 11thoverall with a 3-over par 74.

It was the second consecutive state medal for Dillon after he finished 10^{th} overall last season at Wamego as a freshman.

"It is a real honor to earn another state medal, especially with the quality players that were at the state tournament," Dillon said. "There were lots of good players and lots of good teams."

Ιt

was another notch on Dillon's list of accomplishments that included a Frontier

League title and six straight tournament victories during the 2018 season.



Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein



Louisburg girls soccer coach Kyle Conley

9. Conley, Ebenstein named Class 4A Coach of the Year

Louisburg

girls soccer coach Kyle Conley and Wildcat football coach Robert Ebenstein both

led their respective teams to special seasons.

Those seasons were special enough for both coaches to earn two big awards.

Conley was rewarded for all his hard work in June when it was announced that he was named as the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association's Girls Coach of the Year for Class 4-1A.

He guided the Wildcats to a 14-7 record and a spot in the state championship match, where the Lady Cats finished second overall. The

finish was something to remember for Wildcat fans as that was accomplished in

just the program's third year of existence.

He has posted a

41-18-2 record during his time as the Wildcat girls head coach and also guided

the Louisburg boys soccer team to its best finish in program history in 2017

with a fourth place finish at state.

As for Ebenstein, he

guided the Wildcats to 10 straight victories and a regional championship to

start the 2018 season, before getting knocked out in the sectional round

against eventual state champion, Bishop Miege.

Following the season, the Kansas Football Coaches Association named Ebenstein as the Class 4A Coach of the Year. Ebenstein, who is just in his second season as head coach, has a 16-4 record with the Wildcats as he guided his team to a Frontier League championship this year.



8. Holtzen finishes Louisburg career with 12 varsity letters

Once Isabelle Holtzen

received her diploma and walked out of Louisburg High School for the last time

as a student, she officially became one of the most decorated female athletes

in school history.

No, she doesn't have any individual state championships, or even

one as part of a team. Holtzen's decorations aren't ones in the form of

trophies or all-state honors, but instead, they can be found on the front of

her letter jacket.

Holtzen became the first female athlete in at least 20 years to earn 12 varsity letters, which means she lettered on the varsity level in three sports in each of her four years of high school.

In research done by Louisburg Sports Zone, it was unable to find

the last athlete to accomplish the feat, which could mean Holtzen could be the

first Lady Cat to do so. She competed in cross country, basketball and track and field

The last athlete to come close was in 2001 when Krystal Bowes earned 10 varsity letters before moving on to a collegiate track career at Wichita State.

"The biggest thing that it means to me is to just have an opportunity to participate in three sports at a school like Louisburg," Holtzen

said. "The bigger the school that you go to, the harder it is to play multiple

sports at the varsity level and I think Louisburg is unique in that fact. The

best part of this whole journey was I think my freshman year because there was

no pressure and no one was expecting anything from me. It was surprising and

exciting to be able to letter in all three sports."

Holtzen is currently at

Northern Iowa, where she received a scholarship to pole vault for the Panther

Track and Field Team.



7. Dixon earns All-American, Player of the Year honors, signs with Kansas State

Louisburg

senior Anna Dixon led the Lady Cat volleyball program all season and she was recognized for her play on the court.

Dixon was named to the Under Armour Volleyball All-American team as she received a spot on the honorable mention squad when the list was released in November.

Dixon, the 6-foot-3 outside hitter, was recently named the Class 4A Player of the Year by the Kansas Volleyball Association, and along with that was also selected to the all-state first team.

It was the second year in a row Dixon was named player of the year, as she had to share the honor last season with Rose Hill's Gracie Van

Driel.

The honors certainly didn't stop there as Dixon was all named to the All-Frontier League first team as she helped guide the Lady

Cats to an undefeated league season.

Dixon led the Lady Cats in kills with 584 in 105 sets played. She also finished with 325 digs, as she played all six rotations and also had 50 aces and 42 blocks.

In her four years with the program, Dixon finished with 2,003 kills, which would place that total among the best the school has ever seen.

All that success resulted in a dream come true for Dixon as she made it official last November when she signed to play volleyball at Kansas State.

"I have always known Kansas State was going to be my home," Dixon said. "Even since I committed as a sophomore, I always wanted to go up to Manhattan and see the girls and spend time with the team. K-State is where I need to be."



6. Louisburg wrestling sends six to state, Holtzen earns first state medal

SALINA - As the final

whistle sounded in his blood round match, Cade Holtzen looked up into the

rafters of the Tony's Pizza Events Center and smiled.

He had finally reached his goal.

Holtzen defeated Columbus' Gabe Porter by a 6-0 decision Saturday during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships in Salina and secured his state medal.

"It is one of the best

feelings that I have had in my life," Holtzen said. "Just knowing that I'm

going to place — you just can't match that with anything else."

It certainly wasn't

easy for the Louisburg freshman as he faced a win or go home with nothing

scenario heading into his match with Porter. Holtzen pulled out the victory and

eventually finished sixth overall at 113 pounds to give Louisburg a state

medalist for the third consecutive season.

"It is pretty cool,"

he said. "I have been working for this all season, so to get a state medal is

great. It may not have been as high as I wanted, but any state
medal is pretty
amazing."

Holtzen had a special

year for the Wildcats as he finished with a 45-6 record and broke the school

record for most wins in a single season. He won four different tournaments and

was a Frontier League and regional tournament runner-up.

To add to his resume,

he became only the second freshman in school history to earn state medal —

second to only Austin Hood, who would go on to with three state titles.

Austin Moore finished

one victory shy of earning his first state medal, while Ryan Adams, Thad

Hendrix and Blue Caplinger also picked up wins at the state tournament.



5. Moore, Johnson finished in top 10 at state cross country, girls qualify for second straight year

WAMEGO - It was going

to be hard for the Louisburg High School girls cross country team to duplicate

its magical season of 2017.

Not only did the Lady Cats qualify their team for state for the

first time in program history, but they also had a top five finisher in Trinity

Moore.

Fast forward to 2018, Louisburg wasn't able to match that successful

run — the Lady Cats took it a step further.

Moore, along with freshman Reese Johnson, each had a top 10 finish during the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships at Wamego Country Club, and it is the first time

in school history that two female runners had medaled at a state meet. Louisburg added on to that as the girls finished fifth in the team standings with 154 points, which is also the highest finish in school history.

Moore, who finished

fifth at state a year ago, bested her performance by one place as she took

fourth with one of her better performances of the season. Johnson was right

behind her as she crossed the finish line in sixth.

Shaylor Whitham, Carlee Gassman, Kaitlyn Lewer, Delaney Wright and Kennady Wilkerson were also members of the Lady Cats' team to run at state. Emily Williams was a member of the regional team that finished second overall.



4. Louisburg track earns six state medals, Gassman state runner-up in

300 hurdles

WICHITA — Carlee Gassman had broken the Louisburg High School 300-meter hurdle record three different times in 2018 prior to the state track meet.

She picked the perfect time to make it a fourth.

Gassman broke her own school record in the 300 hurdles in May at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships in Wichita as she ran a time of 45.68 seconds to earn a silver medal as she was the Wildcats' top performer on the weekend. Andale's Abby Smarsh, who is a senior, won the event in 44.73.

It was the Louisburg sophomore's first time competing at the Kansas meet as she transferred in from Iowa last year, where she qualified for

the state meet there in the 400 hurdles.

Gassman's medal in the 300 hurdles was just one of six the Wildcats were able to bring home following the two-day meet. Those six medals

were the most Louisburg has earned since 2011, when the Wildcats combined to

medal in 10 events and the boys won their first team state title.

The 300 hurdles wasn't the only event Gassman found success in as she also medaled in the long jump. Gassman, who hadn't competed in the event

prior to this year, finished fifth with a mark of 17 feet, 0.25 inches.

Isabelle Holtzen

would go on to finish sixth in the pole vault, the boys 4×400 team of Chris

Williams, Blue Caplinger, Ben Wiedenmann and Justin Collins went on to take

seventh. Williams finished eighth in the 400-meter run and

Trent Martin medaled eighth in the boys pole vault.



3. Louisburg volleyball takes runner-up at state for second straight season

HUTCHINSON - The
feeling was much of the same.

The pride of finishing as a state-runner up was a popular one among the members of the Louisburg volleyball team. At the same time, the

frustration of taking second in state in back-to-back seasons was just as prevalent.

Louisburg wasn't quite sure what to feel following its 25-13 and 25-14 loss to Bishop Miege in the championship game of the Class 4A state tournament Saturday at Hutchinson Sports Arena.

In 2017, the Lady Cats fell to Rose Hill by two points in the championship match, and fast

forward to the present, they were in the same spot — holding the state

runner-up trophy. It was the 15th time in

program history that Louisburg finished in the top four at state.

The Lady Cats rattled off four straight wins to start

the tournament, including knocking off No. 1 seed Independence, and defending

state champions Rose Hill and Topeka Hayden. Louisburg then battled back to

defeat Andale in the state semifinals.

"The loss was tough,"

Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "To come so close to a state title two

years in a row, only to come up short is tough. But with that being said, it is

a huge accomplishment for this team to get back to the state championship and

make it two years in a row. Finishing second is nothing to hang our heads on.

Last year's finish fueled the fire for the team this year, and I challenged the

returning players to use this loss and feeling to fuel them for next year."

Louisburg has been

one of the more dominant teams in Class 4A in the last decade as the Lady Cats

have made the state tournament seven out of the last nine years and have

finished as a state runner-up on three different occasions, along with several

third and fourth place finishes. They finished 2018 with a 36-9 record.



2. Louisburg girls soccer advances to title game, has best finish in program history

NORTH NEWTON — The obstacle seemed insurmountable — and it was.

The Louisburg High School girls soccer team found itself in the

Class 4-1A state championship match in the program's third year of existence,

but if they wanted to take it another step further, the Wildcats were going to

have to knock the defending state champion of its perch.

Unfortunately, Bishop Miege wasn't about to be moved.

In a state title game that was played in the sweltering heat in late May at Bethel College, the Wildcats couldn't stay with the Stags in a 5-0 defeat. It was the third consecutive title for Bishop Miege, while Louisburg earned a state plaque for the first time in its short history.

It was special season for the Wildcats as the night before they knocked off Topeka Hayden, 1-0, in the state semifinals to secure the program's first state plaque. In 2017, Louisburg both games in its state tournament appearance and finished fourth.

The road to this state

championship appearance has been an interesting one for the Wildcats. More than

three years ago, a group of Louisburg parents and citizens raised enough money

to begin the girls soccer program and fund it for three years.

Louisburg was in the final year of that funding, and while the program isn't going away, the team realized they needed to play for more than themselves.

"We played for the community tonight," Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher

said after the Hayden win. "We have to remember that when they raised money for

this program, it was just through this year, so I think we owed it to them to

play well. I really think it might have helped with how we played and I think

it was one of the best games we played all season."

"It is a third-year program

with 41 wins, three regional championships, two state final fours and now a

state runner-up," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said after the title game. "We

just have kids who come in and work their butt off. They are not soft, they

aren't weak and from top to bottom they are going to work hard.

"We worked hard, but we just played Miege. That is one of the best teams in the state, and that stinks, but our kids played hard, worked

their tail off and it was a great year. We had people criticize us for how we

got there, but we won games and that really motivated the kids. It got them

fired up to go do something bigger than themselves. I couldn't be more proud of

they stuck together and what they accomplished."



1. Football wins 10 straight, takes Frontier League title and regional championship

It had been almost two

months since Louisburg and Piper squared off on the football field in what was

one of the more entertaining games on the Wildcats' schedule.

Back in early

September, Louisburg left Piper High School with a seven-point win — a victory

that would help propel them to a Frontier League championship and a perfect regular season.

The two teams squared

off again and the stakes were a bit higher. The game, at least for Louisburg

anyway, was even more exciting.

The Wildcats dominated action from the opening kickoff and never looked back in a 48-0 win over the Pirates. In the process, Louisburg won the school's first regional championship since 2016 and are off to a 10-0 start for the first time since 2010.

Louisburg advanced to the sectional round where it fell to eventual state champion Bishop Miege, 55-21, and finished its season with a 10-1 record.

It was as season

marked with special moments, including a 28-7 victory over then-undefeated

Paola late in the year to secure a league title.

"Being 10-0 and then having

that first loss of the season was very disappointing," Louisburg coach Robert

Ebenstein said. "Losing always sucks, but losing in the playoffs and having to

wait until next August is the worst. At the end of the day, Miege is a

very good team and we did some good things. We got them to fourth down on

multiple drives in the first quarter, we just couldn't make the plays on

those big downs. Then we got behind a little and started pressing.

"Overall it was a great year.

I am very proud of our guys and excited for them that they were able to get

double digit wins for only the third time since 2000, and

there was a lot of really good football played during that time period. It was a lot fun to be a part of."



Austin Moore was named to the Kansas Shrine Bowl and was a first-team all-state player for the Wildcats. Moore was also named as the Kansas Small-Class Player of the Year by 810 Varsity.

With all that success, honors

started to roll in for its players as running backs Austin Moore and Blue

Caplinger, along with linemen Brayden White and Kiefer Tucker all earned

all-state honors.

Moore and White went on to be

semifinalists for the Simone Awards and Moore was also selected to participate

in the Kansas Shrine Bowl in the summer of 2019. Ebenstein was also named as

coach of the year by the football coaches association.

Most recently, Moore was

named the Kansas Small-Class Player of the Year and Running Back of the Year by

810varsity.com, while White was named the Small-Class Lineman of the Year.

Ebenstein was also named Kansas Small-Class Coach of the Year by 810 Varsity.

Haight leads Wildcat soccer with first team all-league honor



Louisburg junior Ryan Haight earned first team All-Frontier League honors when the team was announced last week. Haight was one of four Wildcats to be selected to the all-league squad.

With three new schools entering the Frontier League this season, it created even more competition to receive an all-league honor.

For boys soccer, the competition was tough, but Louisburg earned four spots on the all-league team following a 6-11 season that ended in a loss to Bishop Miege in the regional

championship game.

Louisburg junior midfielder Ryan Haight was selected to the first team, while senior forward Brock Bila was named to the second team. Senior Eli Minster and junior Will Frank both earned honorable mention honors on defense.

"I think with our league being so competitive, and adding three new schools, we represented well," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "Obviously, I would like a few more players recognized and I felt some kids deserved to be on higher teams. These young man played well this season and these All-Frontier League honors are very deserving."

Haight, who was named to the first team as a utility player, was a reliable fixture for the Wildcats from his defensive midfield spot. He was only one of four Louisburg players to start every game for the Wildcats this past season.

"Ryan worked his tail off all season," Conley said. "He was our hardest worker and was voted MVP of our team by a landslide in the player's voting. He played so hard and always put his teammates first. I felt that all of his hard work and dedication truly paid off this year."



Senior Brock Bila (1) led Louisburg with 15 goals on the season and earned a spot on the all-league second team.

Bila was the team's leading scorer from the forward position as he scored 15 goals in 15 matches for Louisburg. He was a player that drew a lot of attention from the opposing defense.

"Brock, in my opinion, was the best player on the field every night," Conley said. "He is so skilled and could just find the back of the net. He was our Golden Boot (most goals) and Offensive MVP this season voted by his teammates. He scored some fantastic goals for us."

Minster and Frank were key cogs in the Wildcat defense, and both were reliable players on the back side, which helped earn them honorable mention honors.



Louisburg senior Eli Minster (left) and junior Will Frank were both selected as all-league honorable mentions.

"Eli was a lock down outside back for us this year," Conley said. "He put the team before himself and played outside back for us. He ended the season with three assists, but more importantly he helped keep us in games. He was a leader for us and played really well this season.

"William Frank did a very nice job running the middle of our defense. He played center back and showed a lot of growth throughout the season. He helped keep us in games, especially since our team played a lot of defense this season. Will started and played in all 17 games for us."

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE SOCCER

FIRST TEAM

FORWARD — Collin Hanson, Ottawa, senior; Jeffrey Shoenberger, Spring Hill, senior; Ryan Wokutch, Paola, junior

MIDFIELD — Nick Gulley, Spring Hill, senior; Dylan Jamison, Baldwin, senior; Lucas Vanchi De Souza, Paola, junior

DEFENDER — Jacob Bailey, Baldwin, senior; Grant Burnett, Spring Hill, senior; A.J. Montez, Piper, senior

UTILITY - Ryan Haight, Louisburg, junior

GOALIE - Chezney Haney, Spring Hill, sophomore

SECOND TEAM

FORWARD — Brock Bila, Louisburg, senior; Matthew Jackson, Baldwin, senior; Wyatt Oakland, Piper, senior

MIDFIELD — Sammy Gonzalez-Carillo, Bonner Springs, senior; Jonny Moon, Piper, senior; Grady McCune, Baldwin, sophomore

DEFENDER — Ian Heid, Paola, sophomore; Ezra Steinshouer, Baldwin, senior; Trey Trumbo, Piper, senior

UTILITY - Nathan Cessna, Baldwin, senior

GOALIE - Nathaniel Grosdidier, Eudora, senior

HONORABLE MENTION

FORWARD — Keaton Herron, Eudora, sophomore; Josh Santos, Spring Hill, junior; Caden Willits, Eudora, junior

MIDFIELD — Isaac Bones, Ottawa, senior; Michael Powell, Ottawa, junior; Ronin Richardson, Piper, senior; Gage Sommer, Tonganoxie, senior

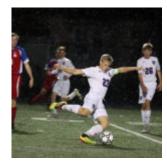
DEFENDER — Brant Arnold, Eudora, junior; Dylan Fanning, Ottawa, senior; Will Frank, Louisburg, junior; Dylan Meier, Eudora, sophomore; Abel Mendoza, Tonganoxie, sophomore; Eli Minster, Louisburg, senior; Garrett Stephan, Bonner Springs,

senior

UTILITY - Owen Roellchen, Piper, junior

GOALIE — Jamison Foglesong, Piper, senior; Wyatt Martin, Tonganoxie, senior; Tanner O'Connor, Baldwin, sophomore; Austin Weaver, Paola, junior

Wildcats fall in regional title game to defending state champ



Louisburg senior defender Eli Minster tries to send the ball away in the rain Thursday during the Class 4-3-2-1A regional championship game at Bishop Miege High School. The Wildcats fell to Bishop Miege, 8-0.

ROELAND PARK — On a rainy and cool evening, the Louisburg boys soccer team traveled to Bishop Miege High School to try and capture its fourth straight regional title.

Unfortunately, the Wildcats were going to have to go through a two-time defending state champion to do so.

Without a full complement of players due to injuries and other

things, Louisburg just couldn't keep up with Bishop Miege as it saw its season come to an end Thursday in an 8-0 loss.

"We just played the state champion," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "The kids fought the whole game and they never stopped. They kept grinding and kept working. I am just really proud of the kids. Miege is probably one of the best three teams in the state and there is a reason why. They are a really talented team and they play well together and they have a mass amount of depth. They are a really quality side.

"But our kids didn't quit and they played their butts off. I think we did a good job of keeping our composure, playing the game the right way and doing what we asked them to do."

Bishop Miege scored to give the Stags a 1-0 lead with 27 minutes remaining in the first half and it remained that way until the latter part of the half. Miege scored three goals in the final 11 minutes to take a 4-0 advantage at halftime.



Junior Ryan Haight slides in to take the ball away from a Bishop Miege player.

The Wildcats (6-11) didn't give up as they fought through the conditions and battled the Stags, but the defending Class 4-3-2-1A state champions were too much for the young and inexperienced Wildcats.

"We ran out quite a few kids, including several freshmen, who went out and did their thing," Conley said. "It was a good opportunity to get them some minutes and experience and say they got to play in a regional championship game. We will learn from it and I think the boys had a pretty good experience. They understood who they just played and what it was. I couldn't be prouder of the boys and the way they played."

It was a season full of ups and downs for Louisburg as it had to deal with multiple injuries throughout the season and Conley was forced to shuffle guys around and create different lineups. The Wildcats began with a 4-1 start, but suffered several close losses along the way, and the mounting injuries didn't help them get back on track.



Defender Will Frank heads the ball away from the goal Thursday against Miege.

Louisburg also had to say goodbye to seniors Eli Minster, Chris Williams, Eric Vazquez and Brock Bila, who all played their final game for the Wildcats.

"The season was what it was," Conley said. "We had some games that we gave away and it kind of stuck us in this situation. It is what it is though. I am just really proud of this group and the way we kept fighting and battling.

"We had a horrific month or so where everything just went bad. We had a lot of injuries and some self-induced problems. We faced a lot of adversity this year and had to play with a lot of different lineups and different guys had to play a lot of minutes. I think that is great experience for them. It is going to be tough losing the four seniors that we had with Brock, Eli, Eric and Chris. We just have to try to fill the holes that they left."

Revenge win over Ottawa puts Wildcats in regional title game



Louisburg's (from left) Ryan Haight, Michael Seuferling, Colin Cook and Haden Yeager celebrate Cook's goal early in the first half Tuesday in Ottawa. The Wildcats defeated the Cyclones, 3-1, to advance to the regional championship.

OTTAWA — In two previous meetings during the regular season, the Louisburg boys soccer team just couldn't figure out a way past Ottawa.

The Wildcats seemed to solve the riddle against the Cyclones on Tuesday and they couldn't have picked a better time to do it.

Louisburg traveled to Ottawa for the Class 4-3-2-1A regional semifinal and the Wildcats got the win they were looking for with a 3-1 victory that sends them to the regional championship for the fourth consecutive season.

"We just had some really bad luck in the first two games with them," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "This was a game where we felt we could win and the kids played that way. The kids played hard, they executed and did their jobs. We showed that we should have beaten them the first two times, but we just had horrific luck and we couldn't finish and this was vengeance for that. I am very proud of the boys."

Scoring wasn't a problem this time around for the Wildcats (6-10) as they had three different players find the back of the net. Junior Colin Cook, along with seniors Chris Williams and Brock Bila, all came up with big goals to go up in front early.

Cook scored his goal nine minutes into the contest when Eli Minster sent the pass to the back side of the goal where Cook was waiting and he was able to tap it in to put Louisburg up, 1-0.

The score would stay that way until early in the second half when Williams collected a rebound off a Bila shot and sent it past the Ottawa goalie for the two-goal lead.



Defender Will Frank heads the ball away Tuesday during the regional semifinal in Ottawa.

Ottawa didn't back down as it scored a goal six minutes later to cut the lead in half. It took Louisburg less than a minute to give them a two-score lead again as Bila finished it off with a goal of his own and the Wildcats were able to hold on.

"We were actually working on that the last few weeks and it worked," Conley said of Cook's goal. "We were able to play that back side ball and he was able to get it in. It was really cool to have three different goal scorers, and all three guys busted their butt and finished well. It was a lot of fun."

The Wildcat defense did its part as the back line of Minster, Will Frank, Michael Seuferling and Haden Yeager, along with help of midfielder Ryan Haight, helped contain the Cyclone

attack. Ottawa turned up the intensity late in the second half as it put three shots on goal, but goalie Thomas Arnett came through with some key saves late.



Junior Ryan Haight holds off an Ottawa player to win a 50-50 ball Tuesday against the Cyclones.

"Thomas made a really great save there on a free kick that just bent around the wall," Conley said. "Thomas read it well and that was huge. Then they had a header in the box that he was able to save as well, which was fantastic. It was a good all-around effort."

Louisburg, which is the No. 11 seed, will travel to No. 3 Bishop Miege (10-5-2) tonight for the Class 4-3-2-1A regional championship match. The Stags have won the last two state championships and the Wildcats know they will have tough

challenge ahead of them.

"We are looking at it as it is just another team and it is that simple," Conley said. "That is why you play the game. We are not looking at paper, and if that was the case, they would have a state championship before the season started. They want to stay in 4A, so we will play them and we will play hard. They are a fantastic team and one of the best in the state of Kansas."

Piper spoils Wildcats' senior night with three penalty kicks



Louisburg goalie Thomas Arnett dives to make one of his several saves during the Wildcats' match with Piper on Thursday in Louisburg. The Wildcats came up short in their regular season finale with a 5-1 loss to the Pirates.

It started out as a Senior Night to remember for Brock Bila, Chris Williams, Eric Vazquez and Eli Minster.

The Louisburg seniors, who were honored prior to the game with managers Hayli Detherage and Camdyn Clark, jumped out to an

early lead against Piper in the Wildcats' last regular season game and the final ever home contest for the Wildcat quartet.

Louisburg had hopes of handing the Pirates, one of the best teams record-wise in Class 4-3-2-1A, a loss to head into the postseason with some momentum.

Piper, unfortunately for the Wildcats, had different plans.

The Pirates were awarded three penalty kicks in the second half, and converted all three, as they went on to down Louisburg, 5-1, and spoiled the Wildcats' celebration.

"Two penalty kicks absolutely kill you, and then you get a third, and it is just frustrating," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "It was just a lot of dumb luck. It just stinks and then we lost our cool little bit there at the end, and that didn't help. In the end, I think this was one of our best games this season and the score is not indicative of how close the game really was. The boys played with a lot of heart and guts, we just didn't have a lot of luck."

The Wildcats (5-10) got out to an early lead as a pair of seniors put Louisburg on top. Williams raced down the sideline and crossed it over to Bila, who found the back of the net, to give Louisburg a 1-0 advantage nine minutes into the match.



Senior Brock Bila celebrates the game's first goal with teammates Landon Johnson (10) and Eric Vazguez.

Five minutes later, Piper scored the equalizer and the two teams went into halftime tied at 1-all. Wildcat goalie Thomas Arnett turned away several Pirate opportunities in the first half to keep the game close.

In the second half, however, Piper broke the game open thanks to the three penalty kicks and another goal that gave the Pirates a lead in which the Wildcats couldn't recover.

"Thomas did his thing," Conley said. "He held his ground and saved everything he should have saved. When you have three penalty kicks it is frustrating, but he is a wall back there. He adjusted and communicated well with his defense. He played fantastic and did a great job in the net for us."

Louisburg's four seniors put together one of their best

showings of the season and Conley was pleased with what he saw out of his team.



The Louisburg seniors (from left) are manager Hayli Detherage, Brock Bila, Eli Minster, Eric Vazquez, Chris Williams and manager Camdyn Clark.

"We played well," Conley said. "Chris was hustling all over the place and brought a lot of high pressure. I think Brock played fantastic and it was probably his best game this year. He did everything we asked him to do. He attacked and went at people. He played awesome and was our best player.

"Eli did a good job and was fantastic on the back side dealing with their runners all the time. Vazquez worked his butt off and played a lot of good balls down the line. Those four boys left it all out on the field and left nothing back."

Although the loss ended the Wildcats' regular season on a sour

note, they have a chance to make amends Tuesday when they travel to Ottawa for the Class 4A regional semifinal.

The Wildcats are the No. 11 seed and will square off with the No. 6 Cyclones (9-7) at 5 p.m. at Ottawa High School. The winner will play Thursday against the winner of Bishop Miege and Bishop Ward for the regional championship.

"The past couple years, we were the guys on the other side that had a big target on our back," Conley said of his previous regional championship teams. "We are 5-10 and I don't think anyone will take us seriously, and I think that is to our advantage. We will just see what happens. We have to come out and play hard and I like our chances. It will be difficult to rebound after a tough loss to Piper."

Late push not enough for Wildcats against Paola



Louisburg sophomore Haden Yeager battles a Paola player for the ball during a match earlier this season. The Wildcats fell to Paola, 3-1, on the road on Oct. 8 at Paola High School.

PAOLA — For the last 15 minutes of its match with Paola, the Louisburg boys soccer team put the Panthers on their heels.

The Wildcats controlled possession and had numerous shots on goal, including one that found the back of the net. Unfortunately for Louisburg, the first 65 minutes didn't look like the final 15.

Paola opened the game with three goals, including two in the second half, and Louisburg couldn't catch up in a 3-1 loss on Oct. 8 at Paola High School. The Wildcats defeated Paola, 4-0, earlier in the season but it was a much different match this time around.

"We really played hard the last 15 minutes or so, and if we played that hard the entire game, I think it is vastly different outcome," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We gave up a couple of incredibly soft goals and didn't play hard. Then all of a sudden the last 15 minutes we decided to play hard. I don't know why we couldn't get up for a rival game. I thought we were ready to go, but it just didn't work out that way."

One positive to come from the Wildcats' loss was the return of midfielder Landon Johnson. The Louisburg junior suffered a leg injury in the offseason and made his season debut against the Panthers.

Johnson contributed in his first game back as he recorded an assist on the Wildcats' lone goal. He set up senior Brock Bila with 13 minutes left in the match and Bila's goal gave Louisburg a little bit of life.

"I thought he did fine out there," Conley said of Johnson. "His vision helps us a bunch, along with his knowledge of the game. He usually puts the ball right where it needs to be and he did a good job for the time he was out there. Once he gets more comfortable out there, he will help us even more."

Louisburg played without five varsity players again against the Panthers and injuries continue to mount against the Wildcats. They did get some time to heal up as they had a week off from action before the final week of the regular season.

The Wildcats (5-9) return to action today when they travel to Ottawa. Louisburg will then host Senior Night on Thursday when it faces off with Piper.

Injuries don't slow Wildcats down in win over Eudora



Louisburg goalie Thomas Arnett goes in for a save against Spring Hill last Tuesday in Louisburg. Arnett made a save on a penalty kick Thursday at Eudora to help give the Wildcats a 1-0 victory to snap a six-game losing streak.

EUDORA — The injury bug has bitten the Louisburg High School boys soccer team hard in recent weeks and it has left the Wildcats a little undermanned.

Those injuries have taken their toll on the Wildcats as they entered Thursday's road match against Eudora on a six-game losing streak.

Louisburg was without five varsity players against the Cardinals, and then later lost another to an injury in game. It wasn't the ideal situation for the Wildcats, but they

didn't let those losses get to them as they scored a second half goal and played strong in the back to pull out a 1-0 win against Eudora.

Not only did Louisburg break its losing streak, but also its string of bad luck.

"I felt the boys have been playing good soccer the past couple games, but we weren't having any luck," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "With four to six varsity players out the past couple weeks or so, we have been playing a lot of freshmen and sophomores as the next man up. The experience is paying massive dividends in their growth and development, but we have some growing pains.

"I thought we played well against Eudora, and the boys handled wherever I put them. They had a great mindset and played as a team. Our boys play really hard and we were able to grind out a positive result."



Sophomore Treston Carlson shields a Spring Hill player from the ball last Tuesday at home.

After a scoreless first half, the Wildcats (5-7) found the back of the net early in the second. Senior Brock Bila revived the Louisburg offense with a shot that sailed past the Eudora goalie, on what turned out to be the game-winning goal.

"We have been preaching to our boys to get more shots to put pressure on our opponents," Conley said. "Brock got a clear look and hit it. I think their goalkeeper wasn't ready and Brock took advantage."

Following the goal, the Wildcat defense faced a lot of pressure from the Eudora attack and got their biggest test when Eudora was awarded a penalty kick with 19 minutes left in the match.

Louisburg goalie Thomas Arnett read the Cardinal kick well and

recorded one of his many saves on the night to preserve the lead for the Wildcats.

"Thomas was ready and prepped," Conley said. "Coach (Michael) Pickman worked on penalty kicks recently with him and the extra training paid off as Thomas made a great save.

"Defensively we played well and kept it together. We defended the last 9-12 minutes like our lives depended on it. They pushed everyone forward and we held our ground."

The win was a nice pick-me-up for the Wildcats as they lost a tough 1-0 match to Spring Hill last Tuesday at home.

Even with all the setbacks and injuries, the team has kept their head up and are looking forward to a strong finish to the season.

Louisburg will try and make it two straight wins tonight when it travels to Paola for a 5 p.m. matchup. The Wildcats will then host Basehor-Linwood this Tuesday in what is a make-up contest from earlier in the season.

"The boys keep showing up and giving it their all," Conley said. "I love this team's blue collar attitude and how they never make excuses. We are about to get healthy and I think we could make some noise in the playoffs."

Wildcats can't snap losing skid on road at Baldwin



Louisburg's Ethan Showalter blocks off a Baldwin defender to the ball Thursday during the Wildcats' game at Baldwin High School. The Wildcats fell to the Bulldogs, 3-1.

BALDWIN CITY — The Louisburg boys soccer team was able to break one streak Thursday against Baldwin, but unfortunately the Wildcats couldn't put an end to an even peskier one.

Louisburg scored its first goal in three matches right before halftime of its game at Baldwin High School and sent the Wildcats into halftime knotted up at 1-all.

However, Baldwin answered with two second half goals and the Wildcats weren't able to respond in a 3-1 defeat. It was the fifth straight loss for Louisburg as it has tried to break out of its slump since Sept. 13, after falling to Spring Hill.

"I thought we played well at Baldwin," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "The score did not show how close the game really was. We had more dangerous chances than they did, but we had two bad mistakes that led to goals. It's unfortunate, but I thought we played much better and have been playing better. The scores have not shown that, but the boys are figuring it out and piecing it together."

The Wildcats (4-6) found themselves down early in the match after a Baldwin goal, but with three minutes left in the first half, senior Brock Bila attacked the goal and got a shot past the Bulldog goalie to tie it.

It didn't take long for Baldwin to take back control as it

scored the go-ahead goal five minutes into the second half and then again with 19 minutes left in the match.



Louisburg goalie Garrett Rolofson bends down to make save Thursday in Baldwin.

Injuries also hampered the Wildcats as they were missing a few varsity contributors and forced some younger players to step in and fill those roles. Still, the Wildcats had their opportunities on goal, but weren't able to finish.

On Tuesday, it was much of the same for Louisburg as it wasn't able to find the back of the net and lost a tough 1-0 match on the road at Tonganoxie. The Chieftains converted a penalty kick with 17 minutes remaining to come out on top.

Despite the recent struggles, Conley is impressed with how his team has improved throughout the year after having just six players with varsity experiencing entering the season, and also dealing with injuries.

Louisburg will try to get back on track this Tuesday when it hosts Spring Hill at the Wildcat Sports Complex. The match is set to begin at 6 p.m.

"I am excited to see what happens when we are completely healthy," Conley said. "We will keep grinding and working to get better every day."

Wildcats lose matches to Baldwin, Spring Hill



Louisburg sophomore Haden Yeager clears the ball out of the back during Monday's match with Baldwin in Louisburg. The Wildcats lost back to back matches to Spring Hill and Baldwin.

The Louisburg High School boys soccer team had gotten off to a hot start to its season by winning four of its first five matches.

Those winning ways have recently hit a snag as that streak was snapped last Thursday in a 3-1 loss to Spring Hill and the Wildcats fell again at home Monday in a 3-0 defeat to Baldwin, which is currently undefeated on the season.

"Against both teams I felt we played well at times, but then we were exposed on our mistakes," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We need to learn from those mistakes and keep improving. Unfortunately, those mistakes are the same mistakes we have been making, but those two teams exposed us."

On the road at Spring Hill, Louisburg found itself down 1-0 at halftime and the Broncos tacked on another goal to put the Wildcats down two midway through the second half.

The Wildcats were able to get back in the match when senior Chris Williams was fouled in the box and Louisburg was awarded a penalty kick. Junior midfielder Ryan Haight converted on the penalty and the Wildcats were building momentum until the Broncos put the match away late in the second half with another score.

In its match with Baldwin at home Monday, Louisburg didn't have many chances on goal as the Bulldogs dominated possession throughout and kept the Wildcat defense busy.

Louisburg goalie Thomas Arnett made several big saves in the net, but Baldwin put pressure on the Louisburg back line most of the night and were able to put three in the back of the net.



Freshman defender Michael Seuferling makes a pass to a teammate last Thursday in Spring Hill.

Although the Wildcats (4-3) have a suffered a couple setbacks, Conley knows his young team will continue grow as the season goes along.

"We are getting back to basics and focusing more on teaching and improving," Conley said. "We are working on our game preparation, being ready to play (showing up on time and with all their equipment), being prepared to play, and playing our game. We will learn and continue to learn.

"We have to remember we only have six kids returning with any previous varsity soccer experience. We will keep getting better and progressing."

The Wildcats will try and bounce back at 6 p.m. tonight when it hosts Ottawa in a Frontier League match.

Back-to-back wins give Wildcats four straight victories



Louisburg senior Eric Vazquez clears the ball away during the Wildcats' 3-1 victory Monday over Lansing in Louisburg. The Wildcats won back-to-back home games with wins over Lansing and Bishop Ward.

In what is one of its busy weeks of the season, the Louisburg High School boys soccer team is two-thirds of the way to perfection.

The Wildcats had three games scheduled for this week, including a pair of back-to-back contests Monday and Tuesday. Playing two games in a span of 24 hours didn't seem to bother Louisburg as it rolled to two victories by a combined score of 7-2.

On Monday, Louisburg hosted Lansing, a Class 5A program, and the Wildcats used a pair of second half goals to pull away for a 3-1 win. Against Bishop Ward on Tuesday, it was much of the same as Louisburg scored three unanswered goals to start the match, and got a hat trick from senior Brock Bila in the 4-1 victory.

Since the Wildcats' season opening loss to Fort Scott, they have reeled off four straight wins and have got things back on track.

"They just do a good job and keep improving every day and that is all we can ask of them," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We are going to put kids in and play them in a bunch of different spots and the thing is these guys just have to keep improving. They are working hard and they are accepting the challenge. We have had some hiccups and there are times where we fall asleep a little bit and get complacent, but it is fun watching this group because they compete and they battle."

It didn't take long for Louisburg (4-1) to get going against Lansing as Bila scored his first of two goals in the match 11 minutes in. Bila got a pass from Logan Faulkner and put it in the back of the net to give the Wildcats a 1-0 lead, and it remained that way to halftime.

Ten minutes into the second half, Bila struck again as defender Eli Minster had a long throw in from the side that landed in front of Bila, and he beat the Lansing defense for his second goal.

Faulkner added a goal to go along with his assist a few minutes later as he took a shot in the box that made it past the Lansing goalie and gave Louisburg a 3-0 lead.

Lansing ended Louisburg's hopes of shutout with 46 seconds left when the Lions were awarded a penalty kick and put it in for their first goal.

"We held our own, and they actually started to counter attack us," Conley said. "With our young group in the middle, we were trying to stay disciplined and trying to hold our shape, but we struggled with that at times. The boys still played well though and did what we asked them to do. They followed the scouting report and we were able to take advantage of some things."



Eli Minster (left) battles a Lansing player for a 50-50 ball Monday in Louisburg.

Against Bishop Ward, the Wildcats followed much of the same recipe as they were able to score early and play from in front. Bila, who registered a hat trick, got going with a goal to put Louisburg up 1-0, just four minutes into the contest.

Five minutes later, the Wildcats were fouled in the box and awarded the penalty kick. Junior Ryan Haight took advantage as he found the back of the net on the penalty kick and put his team up two.

Late in the first half, Bila scored again, this time on an assist from senior Eric Vazquez and the Wildcats had a 3-0 lead at halftime.

"I thought the boys executed the game plan pretty well," Conley said. "I felt the past two nights the boys played with

a tremendous amount of energy. I love the blue collar attitude we play with. I appreciate that the boys come focused and ready to play each and every night.

"The second half we got out of our shape and comfort zone for a 10 minute stretch or so, but regained quickly and attacked as a unit. The boys are getting better each and every night and I could be prouder of their improvement."

Bishop Ward scored on a penalty kick themselves in the second half to break the shutout, but Bila answered late with his third goal to complete the hat trick.

Louisburg will try for five in a row tonight when it travels to Spring Hill for a Frontier League matchup. Varsity is set to begin at 6 p.m.