

Wildcats' state run ends with loss to McPherson in quarterfinals



Louisburg senior Grant Ryals tries to dribble past two McPherson players during the Class 4-1A state quarterfinal match last Tuesday in Louisburg. The Wildcats saw their season come to an end with a 2-1 loss to McPherson.

As the final buzzer sounded in Louisburg's loss to McPherson in the Class 4-1A state quarterfinals last Tuesday, it marked the end of race the Wildcats weren't ready to stop running.

They wanted to keep running all the way to the state semifinals for the second straight season and hoped to bring home a state plaque. The Wildcats almost accomplished that as they put the pressure on McPherson throughout much of the second half, but couldn't convert in the 2-1 defeat that ended their season with a 13-6 record at Wildcat Sports Complex.

It was a second half the Wildcats won, except for a call that ended up being the difference in the contest.

Senior goalie Ambrose Stefan came out to save the ball, but was given a yellow card after the referee said he made contact with a McPherson player. The Bullpups put the penalty kick in the back of the net with 32 minutes left in the match and the Wildcats didn't have an answer.

“The kids showed up and played despite the loss,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We maintained the pressure, had the greater edge in possession and we did a good job of finding feet and playing our game. We had a couple chances, and I don’t know what happened to give them the penalty kick – it’s just the way it goes I guess. I don’t agree with it, and it is unfortunate, but that didn’t lose us the game.”

The Wildcats came out with a sense of urgency in the second half after they found themselves down 1-0 at halftime. It could have been a bigger deficit, but the Louisburg defense came through as Stefan knocked away several shots in front of the goal, and McPherson had a good look at an empty net, but defender Eli Minster headed the ball away to keep it a one score game.

Conley wanted his team to play with a sense of urgency in the second half and the Wildcats did that as they were able to control the possession and put pressure on the Bullpup defense.

“We needed to play with more energy, play harder and go win a 50-50 ball,” he said. “I didn’t want them to have any regrets and to put it all out there. I just wanted them to play with a little more passion, and a little more heart and I think the second half we showed that. We showed how good of a team we could be, how good we are and we just couldn’t get one to go in.”

Louisburg came out of halftime inspired and tied the match three minutes into the second half. Senior Raistlin Brewer was able to get the ball across the line in a scrum in front of the goal to give the Wildcats their first score of the match.



Raistlin Brewer tries to beat a couple McPherson players to a 50-50 ball Tuesday.

McPherson scored on the penalty kick five minutes later, but the Wildcats stayed on the attack

Senior Grant Ryals had a good look at the goal with eight minutes left in the game, but his shot was saved. Fellow senior Christian Scholtz had a header opportunity in the box that nearly went in, but it bounced off the crossbar.

Sophomore Ryan Haight had a shot on goal with four minutes remaining that went off the crossbar as well. At that point, Conley took out a defender and brought in junior Chris Williams to join fellow forward Brock Bila up top to try and get more scoring chances, but the Wildcats weren't able to find the back of the net.

"We could have stayed with what we had and still got plenty of

looks,” Conley said. “We just wanted two guys a little bit higher so we could be more aggressive. I didn’t think we could do it the whole game because if left such huge channels for them to run on and that is all they wanted to do. Unfortunately we just couldn’t get one to go in and McPherson was just holding on for dear life in the last 30 minutes.

“We kept grinding and had great opportunities. We hit the crossbar twice, we just couldn’t quite get it there. McPherson is a good team, and I think everyone anticipated a great game and that is what it ended up being. Coming out on the bottom end of it stinks really bad, but I think the kids played their butts off and they left it all out there and did everything we could.”

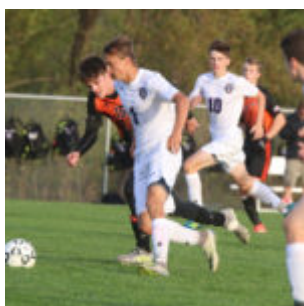


Goalie Ambrose Stefan gets a hug from coach Kyle Conley following the Wildcats' 2-1 loss to McPherson.

The loss ended what was a successful season for the Wildcats as they finished with their first Frontier League championship since 2010 and third consecutive regional title. Conley was happy with what his team was able to accomplish.

“We got 10 wins in the regular season, not many teams do that,” he said. “We won a league title, not many teams can say they did that. Winning a regional championship, not many teams can say they did that either. We came through, played really hard, but unfortunately we came out on the losing end. I am proud of these guys and what we were able to achieve. “

Louisburg soccer ready for battle with McPherson



Louisburg junior Brock Bila is one of several Wildcats who hope to find success against McPherson tonight in the Class 4-1A state quarterfinal game in Louisburg.

The Louisburg High School boys soccer team has found itself in a familiar spot.

For the second straight season, the Wildcats will have a chance to qualify for the state semifinals on their home field at Wildcat Sports Complex.

Last season, Louisburg won a wild overtime contest against Wichita-Trinity and the Wildcats hope for the same result this time around. Louisburg (13-5) will host McPherson (13-5) at 5 p.m., today as the Wildcats will try and make their second trip to the state semifinals.

“I still have a lot of nerves,” Louisburg senior Grant Ryals said. “We have a lot of seniors on this team and we know we want to make it out to state again. We are pumped, but we are still a little nervous too. We watched film all day (Monday) to see how we can attack them.”

Following the Wildcats’ 1-0 overtime victory over Independence in the regional championship game Thursday, they were still riding high into the weekend, especially after they found out late Friday night they would be hosting the state quarterfinals.

Due to the fact both Louisburg and McPherson had the same records, the Kansas State High School Activities Association performed a coin flip to determine who would host, and Louisburg coach Kyle Conley received a call later informing him of the result.

“I am not sure how it all worked, I was just super excited that we didn’t have to get on a bus for three hours one way,” Conley said. “The boys will truly get one last home game. If we show up, we have a chance to play another game at state and I think that is motivation enough. We will be sleeping in our own bed, eating our same pregame meal and don’t have to worry about traveling. That is definitely a benefit for us.”

Louisburg will face a McPherson team that plays mainly on a turf surface and the Wildcats hope to use that as an advantage against an aggressive Bullpup team.

“Anytime you change your surroundings, the environment, or conditions, I think it is an advantage for the team that has those things,” Conley said. “McPherson is a turf team and they

are going to be playing on grass and they are going to have to be on a bus for three hours and that helps us.”

However, the one thing that has caught Conley’s attention is McPherson’s style of play as the Bullpups will look to pressure the Louisburg back line.

“They are going to be the most pressuring team offensively that we have seen all year and we have seen some good teams too,” Conley said. “The way they push, and the way they get their backs in the attack, they are going to pressure more than any team we saw this year or last year. Wichita Trinity might be the closest example to them. They are a mixture of Baldwin, Spring Hill and Tonganoxie with how they play. They just push, push, push and they are a really good team and are well-coached.”



Team captain Scott Murphy and the rest of the Wildcat defense hopes to keep the McPherson attack at bay

tonight.

With that, the Wildcat back four of Kris Light, Scott Murphy, Will Frank and Eli Minster, along with midfielder Ryan Haight, will have to be alert to keep McPherson off the scoreboard.

“They are turf team and they like to play a lot of through balls, so we are going to have to watch that,” Light said. “They are good team, obviously. We just have to work it around outside and want it more than them. Communication will be key for us and just outworking them in the back.”

Although McPherson’s style might be unique to what the Wildcats have seen in recent years, they also realize the Bullpups will have to prepare for them and what they bring to the table.

“We just have to be ready,” Conley said. “Half of it is they have to defend against our style too. Quite honest, I think our styles are so conflicting and it will be interesting to see whose style wins out. We want to attack the flanks, they want to hit the overlap and go down the middle and try to play the second ball through. We do that too, be we have a little different shape. It should be a really good match.”

If the Wildcats advance, they will compete in the Class 4-1A state semifinals on Friday and Saturday in Olathe. Still, they know they have a big challenge ahead of them in order to get there.

“We definitely enjoyed it Thursday and winning another regional title,” Ryals said. “We know that coming back Monday, it is a new week and we have more competition ahead of us. We know what we have to do. If we just play our game, we have a chance to play out state again.”

Ryals' penalty kick lifts Wildcats to regional title



Louisburg senior Kris Light hoists the regional championship trophy following the Wildcats' 1-0 win over Independence on Thursday in the Class 4-1A regional championship game in Louisburg.

Grant Ryals had already gotten his mom, Janelle, flowers for her birthday prior to Thursday's Class 4-1A regional championship game in Louisburg.

As it turned out, Ryals gave his mother – and the rest of the Louisburg soccer team – a present no one is going to forget.

In a scoreless match in overtime, Ryals converted a penalty kick to give Louisburg a 1-0 victory over Independence. The win gave the Wildcats their third consecutive regional title and the seventh in the program's history.

Following the team celebration that found Ryals on the bottom of a dog pile, he ran to his mother after he gave her one of the more memorable presents a parent could want.

"First thing I did was give her the biggest hug," Grant said. "I bought her flowers earlier and I was hoping that we would

win and it would be that much better. Then for me to score the game-winner was just perfect.”

That perfect feeling spread to the rest of the Wildcat team as they celebrated their opportunity to play at least one more game as they are one of the state’s final eight teams.

“It was our goal,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We talked about getting 10 wins, we talked about being league champs and we talked about winning a regional championship. If we work hard, do our job, then those things happen. We almost left it here with our inability to finish the ball, but the kids worked hard and it’s fantastic.

“It is so awesome when the community comes and joins us. These boys play so much for these people and love them so much – not just their family – but everybody. It is really cool be able to host this and do our job at the beginning of the season to be able to do this.”



Grant Ryals points to the stands after he scored the game-winning goal in overtime Thursday.

Louisburg's job is not done, however, as the Wildcats will host the Class 4-1A state quarterfinal game for the second consecutive season. They will play McPherson at 5 p.m. on Tuesday at Wildcat Sports Complex.

As exciting as the Wildcats' regional championship was, Louisburg had an opportunity to put some distance between itself and Independence several different times throughout the contest.

The Wildcats (13-5) took 24 shots against an Independence defense that had eight or nine players behind the ball at all times. Despite Independence's tactic of trying to pack it in, Louisburg still had many good looks, but couldn't convert.

Brock Bila, Jarod Rose, Landon Johnson, Christian Scholtz,

Eric Vazquez, Raistlin Brewer and Chris Williams all had shots on goal, but they either just went wide of the target, sailed above the cross bar, or was saved.

Frustration was starting to mount at times as the Wildcats desperately wanted to get a score in regulation.

“You start pressing and they were trying to do a little bit too much,” Conley said of his team. “They struggled to get into the flow a little bit and Independence was another team that put a ton of kids behind the ball. They were basically looking to get a tie. Every now and then they would counter, but they just packed it in. They did a good job of not getting us good looks, but when we did, we weren’t able to finish it.

“Independence started believing a little bit and got the momentum. However, our kids were mentally tough and fought through all that. They didn’t quit and that is a credit to them.”

The Wildcats thought they had broken through earlier in the contest as Ryals found the back of the net on a direct kick from 20 yards away less than 10 minutes into the second half. However, after the celebration, the Wildcats were called for offsides and impeding the view of the goalie, and the goal was disallowed.



Senior Raistlin Brewer heads the ball away Thursday against Independence.

That left for even more angst on the Wildcat sidelines.

“It all worked out in the end, but it was extremely frustrating at the time,” Conley said. “We went from a high to a low when we found out it didn’t count and had a little ‘Woe is me’ moment. Then we picked it back up and started taking care of things.”

Louisburg’s defense, which hasn’t allowed a goal so far in the postseason, tightened up when Independence tried to attack. Kris Light, Scott Murphy, Will Frank and Eli Minster fortified the Wildcat back line, while goalie Ambrose Stefan secured his third consecutive shutout.

Independence’s best chance came early in the overtime as the Bulldogs sent a corner kick into the box that bounced around

before Brewer cleared the ball away and prevented the game-winner.

With four minutes left in the overtime, Johnson put pressure on the Bulldog defense as he dribbled the ball into the box and was taken down by an Independence defender. The Wildcats were awarded the penalty kick and Conley chose Ryals to take it.

“I have been a part of stranger things,” Conley said. “We talked earlier this week that Independence beat Baldwin 1-0 on only one shot, which was a penalty kick. The way they were packing it in, I was praying he was going to put it in. I couldn’t look at first, but then I had to.”

Ryals left no doubt as he pounded the shot past the diving Independence goalie and the celebration began as his goal put the Wildcats into the state quarterfinals.



The Louisburg soccer team poses for a picture following the Wildcats regional championship victory over Independence. It was the seventh regional title in program history.

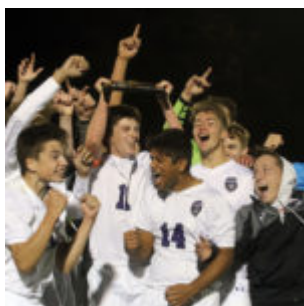
“The day before at practice, we probably took PK’s for like 30-45 minutes” Ryals said. “I just kind of had a feeling that this game might come down to it. I didn’t miss any in practice and I have only missed one all season. I just did what I usually do. He guessed the right way, but I just beat him with too much power.”

Now, the Wildcats will try for their second straight trip to the state semifinals and a win over McPherson would seal that.

“You want to play as long as you can,” Conley said. “You win a regional championship and then anything can happen. You make the Elite 8 and it is really fun and you take great pride in it. I couldn’t be more proud of how hard we played. We kept grinding and that is a good thing and proud of them for not giving up.”

Make sure to [click here](#) for more photos from Louisburg’s regional championship victory.

PHOTO GALLERY: Louisburg soccer regional title



Here is a photo gallery from tonight’s Class 4-1A regional championship game in Louisburg. Wildcat senior Grant Ryals

scored on a penalty kick in overtime to give Louisburg a 1-0 win over Independence.























Senior Raistlin Brewer heads the ball away Thursday against Independence.



Team captain Scott Murphy and the rest of the Wildcat defense hopes to keep the McPherson attack at bay tonight.











Grant Ryals points to the stands after he scored the game-winning goal in overtime Thursday.















The Louisburg soccer team poses for a picture following the Wildcats regional championship victory over Independence.



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Wildcats advance to regional title game with win over Ottawa



Louisburg sophomore Ryan Haight heads the ball away during the Wildcats' Class 4A regional semifinal game against Ottawa on Tuesday in Louisburg. The Wildcats won the contest, 3-0, and will play Independence title for the regional title.

The frustration was starting to mount for the Louisburg boys soccer team.

Louisburg peppered the Ottawa defense with 38 shots Tuesday in the Class 4A regional semifinal, but most of them seemed to miss in every way possible. They were either saved, just wide of the target or hit the post.

Then when the Wildcats did find the back of the net, the goals were nullified due to an offsides penalty.

Despite all that, Louisburg did sneak three shots past the Ottawa back line and the Wildcats advanced to the regional championship with a 3-0 victory over the Cyclones in Louisburg.

That result will pit Louisburg against Independence for the regional title at 5 p.m. today at the Wildcat Sports Complex.

"We did a very nice job of attacking and creating a massive

amount of opportunities,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We just struggled to find the back of the net. I was pleased for the most part with how hard we played. We need to work on our ability to make simple passes, because we had way too many simple turnovers. We did a nice job in the back of dealing with their counter attack and holding up against their pressure. It was a good result and now we can focus on a strong Independence team.”

Louisburg (12-5) will host an Independence team with an 11-4-2 record after the Bulldogs defeated Baldwin in the other regional semifinal, 1-0.

At the same time, the Wildcats will be vying for their third consecutive regional crown and a spot in the state quarterfinals.

“Independence plays very aggressive,” Conley said “We will have to be able to handle that aggression and possess the ball and attack. It’s shaping up to be a great game. It also helps we get to play at home in the friendly confines of Wildcat Sports Complex.

“We will be ready. Playing for a regional championship is our goal. This is a great opportunity for both teams and I am sure it will be a quality match.”



Louisburg senior defender Kris Light (right) battles an Ottawa player for a 50-50 ball Tuesday in Louisburg.

Against Ottawa, the Wildcats were able to get on the board early in the first half. Senior midfielder Grant Ryals nailed a shot from about 20 yards out that found the corner of the net to put Louisburg up 1-0 just 10 minutes into the match.

Louisburg had its opportunities the rest of the half, but couldn't convert and the Wildcats still held a one goal lead at halftime.

It didn't take long for Louisburg to get going after that as sophomore midfielder Ryan Haight scored to double Louisburg's lead just two minutes into the second half. Junior forward Brock Bila sealed the win with another goal late in the contest.

The Cyclones didn't threaten much as Wildcat goalie Ambrose Stefan made just two saves, but earned his third consecutive shutout. The back four of Scott Murphy, Kris Light, Eli Minster and Will Frank also did their job in keep the Ottawa attack at bay.

Should the Wildcats win a regional championship tonight, the remaining teams will be reseeded and state quarterfinal games will be announced tomorrow. The actual state quarterfinals will be played on Oct. 31.

Wildcats capture league title on Senior Night



Louisburg senior Grant Ryals pumps his fist in the air in front of the Wildcat crowd Thursday following his goal on Senior Night. The Wildcats defeated Ottawa 6-0 and Ryals was one of 10 seniors honored before the contest.

All 10 Louisburg soccer seniors took the pitch together for the first time this season as all 10 got the opportunity to start on Senior Night against Ottawa.

Once it was all over, all the Wildcats did was leave as league champions.

Louisburg defeated Ottawa 6-0 on Thursday at Wildcat Soccer Stadium, and the victory allowed the Wildcats to clinch the Frontier League title outright with a 10-2 league mark and they finished the season with an 11-5 overall record.

It was the first league title for Louisburg since 2010 and a perfect way to honor a big Wildcat senior class.

“It feels so good,” senior Grant Ryals said. “After seven years of not winning a league title, then last year after throwing it away losing to Baldwin, it feels good not to share it. I will remember this game for years.”

Ryals joined fellow seniors Raistlin Brewer, Kris Light, Ambrose Stefan, Scott Murphy, Kyle Allen, Christian Scholtz, David Holiday, Jarod Rose and Dalton Ribordy as they were all recognized in front of their home fans prior to the contest.



Seniors (front row, from left) Christian Scholtz, Grant Ryals, Ambrose Stefan, Scott Murphy, Kyle Allen; (back)

David Holiday, Jarod Rose, Dalton Ribordy, Kris Light and Raistlin Brewer were all honored prior to Thursday's Senior Night game.

Louisburg coach Kyle Conley couldn't have picked a better way to send his seniors out than with a league crown.

"It means a lot." Conley said. "The league title was one of the things that we let slip away last year. For the boys, we sat down and set goals at the beginning of the year and the first step is to win a league title. Knowing that no matter what happened, we were still going to get a share of it. I told the guys that we need to get it outright. This is what we want and this is what we have worked for. It is not good enough to enjoy the night and not play hard.

"The guys were fired up when I told them I was going to let the 'Senior 10' go. We call them the Dream Team and I wondered how the Dream Team would do. Dang if they didn't score in the first two minutes of the game. They played hard, they were focused and ready to roll. They had their heads on right and they did a really good job."



Christian Scholtz heads the ball in for a goal in the first half against Ottawa on Thursday.

Those seniors did get off to a quick start as the Wildcats scored two minutes into the contest on a goal from Brewer and he was one of four different seniors to score in the first half.

Next, it was Ryals' turn. Ryals took a corner kick, but just made a light pass to teammate Landon Johnson in front of him and Johnson tapped it right back to Ryals. His shot from about 20 yards out found the back of the net.

"For us seniors, knowing this was our last regular season game at home, and having a big crowd out to support us, we knew what we had to do," Ryals said. "We had to come out quick. We knew how Ottawa was going to play and they just kick a lot of long balls. We started with our same back line and we were able to get a couple quick goals and finished the job."

“It is pretty special to score on Senior Night. I think I had like 20 members of my family here to watch it, so that is pretty awesome.”

A pair of seniors connected for the Wildcats’ third goal as Holiday dribbled into the box near the ball and crossed it over to Scholtz, who headed the ball in for a 3-0 lead. Then with six minutes left in the first half, Rose connected with a goal of his own and Louisburg took a 4-0 halftime advantage.

Ryals and Johnson both had two assists to help with all the scoring, while Holiday and Brewer also added an assist each.

Louisburg pushed its lead to 6-0 right after halftime and it took all of 30 seconds. Junior Brock Bila scored back-to-back goals to open the second half to all but seal the win and the Wildcats’ outright league title.

It was more than enough to bring a packed Wildcat Soccer Stadium to its feet.

“When you see the stands full, everyone up chanting and the student section going nuts, that is a fun environment to play in,” Conley said. “You want to play hard, you want to play better and not let your town down. Ultimately, everything we do represents our community and that is what we are after. I think the boys did a great job in that aspect.”

The Wildcats tried to have a little more fun as they tried to get Light, who normally plays on defense and Ribordy, a backup goalie, a chance at scoring a goal. Both players had opportunities, but couldn’t find the back of the net. Ribordy did score his first goal earlier in the day during the junior varsity’s 7-0 win.



Senior Dalton Ribordy tries to settle a ball in the box Thursday against Ottawa.

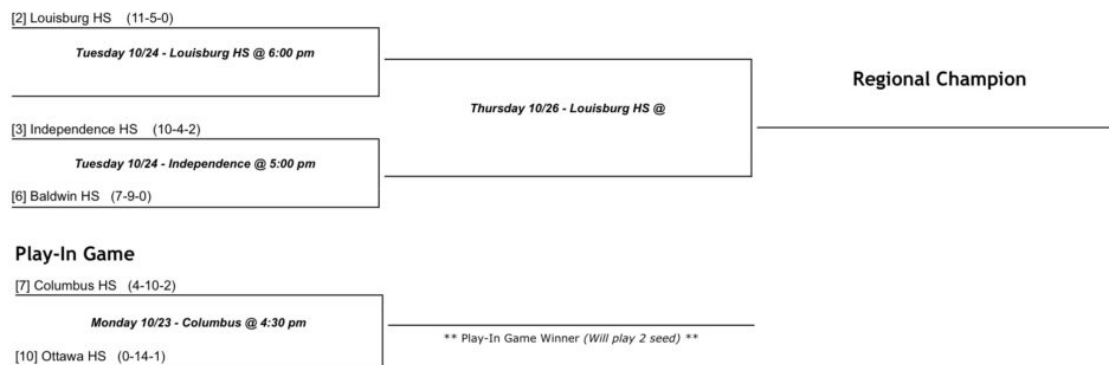
“We wanted them to go out there and run a little bit,” Conley said of Ribordy and Light. “Mr. Ribordy is a straight basketball player that we convinced to come out and play soccer to stay in shape. He busts his tail every day in the goalkeeping aspect, so we started dabbling with the idea of him playing up top in a JV game, just so he would know what to do when he went in. He came in ready to roll and just played hard. It is good to see Kristopher up there running around and he had two pretty good chances to put one away.”

Louisburg’s defense did its job as Stefan recorded his sixth shutout of the season, while the back line of Murphy, Light, Will Frank and Eli Minster didn’t give Ottawa many chances on goal and help secured a league title.

“It was a team win for sure,” Conley said. “They did a good

job of playing as a team and as a family.”

East Regional #2



Louisburg earns the No. 2 seed and will host the regional tournament this week.

The Wildcats will begin their quest for another regional championship Tuesday. Louisburg earned the No. 2 seed and will play the winner of the play-in game between Columbus and Ottawa at 6 p.m. on Tuesday in Louisburg.

If Louisburg advances, they will host the regional championship Thursday.

Photo gallery: Senior Night Soccer



Louisburg seniors (front row, from left) Christian Scholtz, Grant Ryals, Ambrose Stefan, Scott Murphy, Kyle Allen; (back row) David Holiday, Jarod Rose, Dalton Ribordy, Kris Light and Raistlin Brewer were all honored before tonight's 6-0 victory over Ottawa.











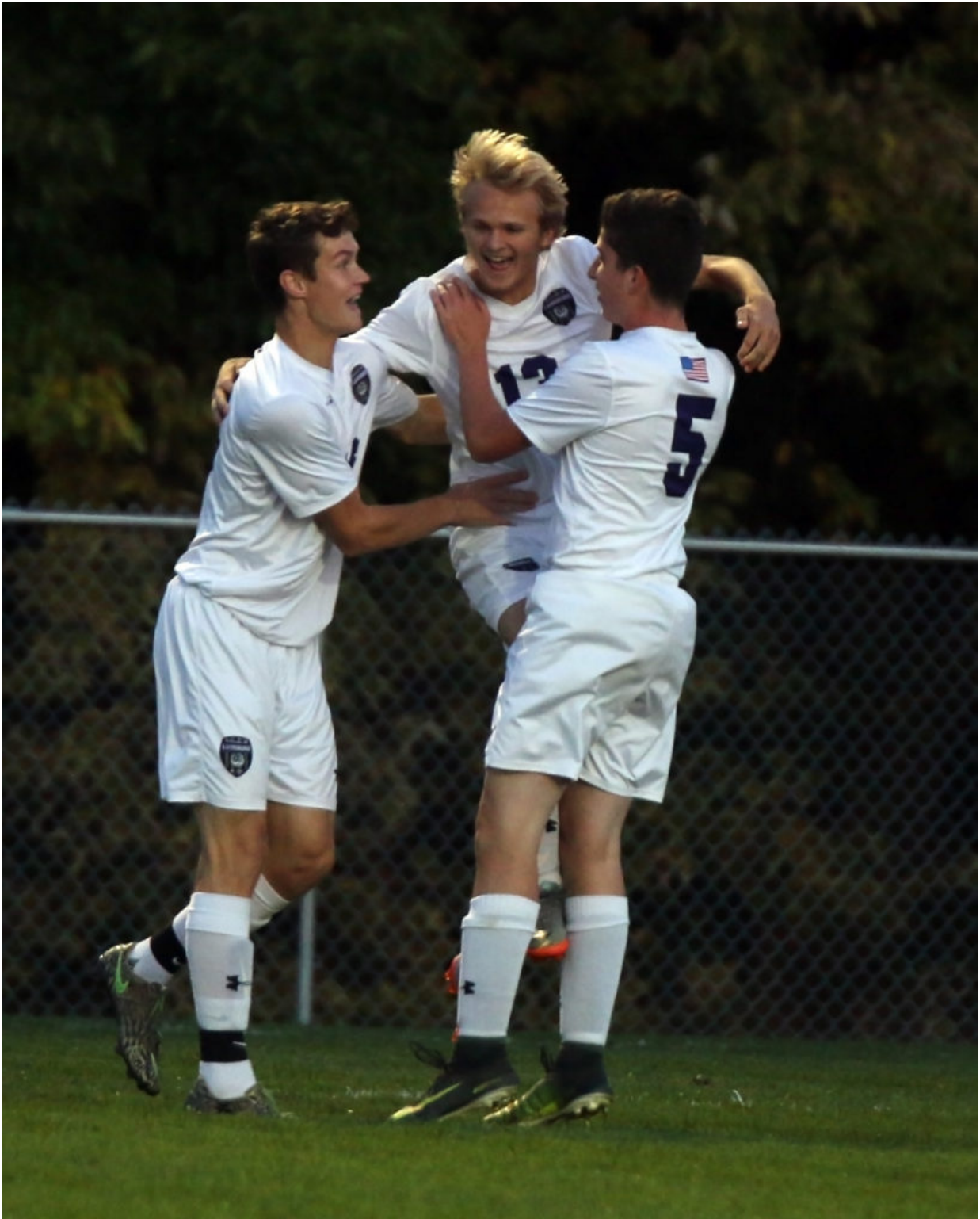


















Christian Scholtz heads the ball in for a goal in the first half against Ottawa on Thursday.











Senior Dalton Ribordy tries to settle a ball in the box Thursday against Ottawa.





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Wildcats clinch share of league title despite loss



Louisburg senior Scott Murphy clears the ball out of the back Monday during the Wildcats make-up game with Piper at Wildcat Soccer Stadium. The Wildcats lost the match, 2-0.

As the Louisburg High School boys soccer team walked off the pitch at Wildcat Soccer Stadium following Monday's 2-0 loss to Piper, the Wildcats' mood wasn't a great one.

However, once a few more minutes passed, their mood perked up a bit.

Louisburg entered Monday tied with De Soto for the Frontier League lead, but later that evening De Soto was handed a 2-0 league loss by Baldwin, which ultimately gave the Wildcats a least a share of their first league title since 2010.

The Wildcats (10-5) will have an opportunity to keep the league title all to themselves tonight when they host Ottawa on Senior Night.

"Losing to Piper in the fashion that we did was extremely frustrating, but the silver lining was Baldwin beating De Soto," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "It guarantees us at least a share of a league title. It was nice, but we need to stay focused because we still have a lot of work to do. We have an opportunity to win it outright and Ottawa has been

playing much better so we will have our hands full.”

Before the loss to Piper, the Wildcats picked up a crucial road win last Thursday when they traveled to Eudora and left with a 2-0 win.

It wasn't easy as Eudora played a different formation and kept several players back, making it more difficult for Louisburg to get quality shots on goal. The Wildcats kept pressing the attack and took 22 shots.

Senior David Holiday broke open a scoreless game in the second half with a goal, and a few minutes later, junior Chris Williams added another goal to all but seal the win for Louisburg.

“Eudora packed it in quite a bit,” Conley said. “They played the majority of the game with nine guys behind the ball. They did whatever they could to take away passing lanes and make it difficult to break through. We eventually broke them down with two non-starters stepping up big time and finding the back of the net.

“The boys were frustrated at first, but settled in and found a way to break through. Eudora was playing a lot of close games and are making it very difficult to score on them. It was a really, really good result for us.”

Eudora only took two shots on goal as the Wildcat defense didn't get much of a test, but goalie Ambrose Stefan earned his fifth shutout of the season as the back line of Eli Minster, Kris Light, Scott Murphy and Will Frank did their job as well.



Senior defender Kris Light passes the ball out of the back Monday against Piper.

Against Piper, the Wildcats found themselves down early as the Pirates scored 12 minutes into the contest. Louisburg kept Piper off the scoreboard for the rest of the first half, and much of the second, to give itself a chance to tie the match.

The Wildcats had a few opportunities on goal as junior Brock Bila, senior Grant Ryals and sophomore Landon Johnson had looks at the net, but couldn't convert. Piper sealed the win with six minutes left in the match with its second goal.

"Piper was a very aggressive team and played very quick," Conley said. "I think we struggled because we do not have many teams that play like that in our league. They had three really well coached kids in the middle and they really had their way with us in the first half. I felt the second half we did very well in handling their speed of play and actually played with a

majority of the possession.

“I think we made some good adjustments at halftime and the boys really, really stepped up their intensity in the second half. I was proud of our guys and they didn’t quit. They fought to the last whistle and kept playing hard.”

Louisburg will try for the outright league title tonight against Ottawa. The junior varsity will begin at 4:30 p.m., with the varsity to follow.

It is also Senior Night for the Wildcats as they will honor their 10 seniors in-between the two contests.

“Senior Night will be a great opportunity to celebrate our 10 seniors,” Conley said. “These young men have been part of a great season thus far. The success we have is a direct reflection to their hard work and dedication. It will be an intense and emotional night. Winning an outright league title will be something that these young men will be able to reflect on the rest of their lives.”

Louisburg soccer blanks Baldwin, holds on to league lead



Louisburg sophomore Landon Johnson puts a shot on goal against Baldwin on Monday at Wildcat Soccer Stadium. Louisburg shutout Baldwin, 3-0, to improve its record to 9-4 on season.

With a possible Frontier League title hanging in the balance, the Louisburg boys soccer team needed a win against Baldwin on Monday to stay atop the standings.

The Wildcats made sure they didn't lose that spot atop the perch. Louisburg came through at home as the Wildcats shutout Baldwin, 3-0, to earn the season sweep over the Bulldogs and improve its record to 9-4 on the season and 8-2 in Frontier League play.

Louisburg is currently tied with De Soto with two league losses, and if the season ended in a tie, then both schools would be considered co-champions.

"It is our league title to lose," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "If we keep playing hard and doing our job, then we will be in the driver's seat. At the same time, if we don't execute then any night it could slip up and go away. We just have to keep doing our job and good things will happen.

"The kids came out focused and played with a little bit of a chip on their shoulder, I think. That is a really good team that we just beat and we made it look way easier than what it was. They are going to be a really dangerous team come playoffs."

A lot of good things happened for Louisburg against Baldwin as the Wildcats controlled the possession and had 14 shots on goal. Three of those shots went in and the Wildcats got out to an early lead in the first half.

Junior forward Brock Bila scored his first of two goals 14 minutes into the contest on an assist from sophomore Landon

Johnson. Johnson played the Bila on a give-and-go opportunity in the middle of the field and Bila shot it past the Baldwin goalie.



(From left): Kris Light, Jarod Rose, Brock Bila, Grant Ryals and David Holiday celebrate a goal in the first half Monday against Baldwin.

Louisburg took that 1-0 lead into halftime, but the Wildcats didn't wait long to give themselves some cushion.

Senior Christian Scholtz crossed the ball into the box, where he found the foot of senior teammate Raistlin Brewer, who put the shot away just 20 seconds into the second half. Bila scored the game's final goal several minutes later on an assist from senior midfielder Grant Ryals.

"We knew we had to come out and set the tone and apply a ton of pressure," Conley said. "The first game we played they just

shredded us up. The kids bought into the adjustment we made and they just executed phenomenally this time around.

“That first goal we had was just beautiful and it was good to see the kids execute, knowing their job, playing with confidence and just playing hard. That is what I need the kids to do. They just trust the process and good things happen.”

The Wildcat defense also didn't allow many good looks at the goal as senior goalie Ambrose Stefan earned the shutout with three saves, while the back line provided a lot of support. Scott Murphy, Kris Light, Will Frank and Eli Minster, who is in for an injured Kyle Allen, all turned away opportunities and frustrated the Baldwin attack.

“We are starting to figure out that if we are aggressive then we can be pretty stinkin' good in the back, when we are not hesitant or soft,” Conley said. “They are playing hard back there and Eli has been stepping up quite a bit at the outside back and Scotty has been solid there as well. Kris and Will have been solid all year and they are like the four horsemen back there. We are not really subbing and they are doing a good job.”

Although it was a big win for the Wildcats as far as the league standings were concerned, it was also a memorable in another way. Following the victory, the team made a postgame announcement honoring Conley for his 50th victory as the Louisburg boys and girls head soccer coach. He has an all-time record of 50-21-3 in his four seasons with the programs.



Louisburg players unveiled a banner honoring head coach Kyle Conley for his 50th victory following Monday's win over Baldwin.

He may have not liked all the attention, but Conley has enjoyed the opportunity to coach both programs and all they have accomplished.

"Don't get me wrong, I appreciate it very much, but I absolutely hate it," Conley said of the honor. "It is all about the kids. Without those kids playing hard and doing their job, you don't win any games. I didn't score any goals and it is all about these kids and they deserve as much, if not, more than I do. I couldn't be prouder of a group of kids in my four seasons to allow this to happen. I have been very fortunate."

Louisburg returns to action tonight when it travels to Eudora. Junior varsity will begin at 4:30 p.m. and varsity will

follow.

Wildcats earn sweep of Spring Hill, fall to De Soto



Louisburg defender Will Frank heads the ball away last Tuesday during the Wildcats' match with Spring Hill in Louisburg. The Wildcats earned their second win over Spring Hill on the season with a 5-1 victory.

Last week was a mixed bag for the Louisburg High School boys soccer team, but it couldn't have gotten off to a better start.

For the first time in several years, the Wildcats earned a sweep of Spring Hill and did so in dominating fashion as it rolled to a 5-1 victory Tuesday at Wildcat Soccer Stadium.

Unfortunately, Louisburg found itself on the other side Thursday as it fell to De Soto for the second time this season, 2-0, at De Soto High School.

Still, the win against Spring Hill is something the Wildcats (8-4 overall, 7-2 league) can build on as there is just a couple weeks left in the regular season.

"We came out ready to go," Louisburg boys coach Kyle Conley said of the Spring Hill win. "The boys team has not swept Spring Hill in a season in an extremely long time and that was one of our goals. The boys played determined and focused. I couldn't be prouder of our effort. It was a great all-around team win."

The Wildcats' match with Spring Hill was unique as both teams were forced to play down a man. Early in the first half, the Bronco goalie grabbed Louisburg forward Chris Williams in the box and was awarded a red card.

Then about five minutes later, Wildcat forward Brock Bila was given two yellow cards, which turned into a red and he was also forced to sit the rest of the game. So instead of each teams having 11 players, it turned into a 10-on-10 matchup.

"The game was pretty wild," Conley said. "I have never been a part of a game that had both sides playing 10v10 before. It was an interesting element. Losing our leading goal scorer and their goalkeeper isn't ideal by any means. I think our replacements stepped up a little more than theirs. The goalkeeper for Spring Hill is a fantastic player and losing him hurt them greatly."



Louisburg sophomore Ryan Haight (4) celebrates with his teammates after scoring the match's first goal last Tuesday against Spring Hill. Haight ended the night with a hat trick.

Louisburg also got some offensive production from an unexpected source. Sophomore Ryan Haight, who normally plays as a defensive midfielder, scored his first goal of the season to give Louisburg an early lead.

It wouldn't stop there as Haight would eventually finish with three goals and record his first hat trick. Senior Grant Ryals also performed well with a pair of goals to wrap up the Louisburg scoring, while sophomore Landon Johnson had two assists for the Wildcats.

"Ryan did a great job for us," Conley said. "To start the game he was a holding midfielder and for the first time in a while he didn't have an individual defensive assignment. This

allowed him to be a little more free. He pushed through and got us started with a very nice goal early.

“When we got our double yellow card, we needed another player up top. So with his confidence high, we took a chance letting him run up top and he made the most of it.”

After Haight’s first goal, the Wildcats kept on the attack. Williams sprinted toward the box on a through ball and had a good path to the goal, but the Spring Hill goalie grabbed Williams in the box, which resulted in a red card.

Louisburg was awarded the penalty kick and Ryals put the attempt away to give the Wildcats a 2-0 lead early in the first half.

Williams provided a lot of pressure up top in Bila’s absence and caused problems for the Spring Hill defense.

“I felt Chris did a fantastic job,” Conley said. “His speed caused havoc on them defensively. His work ethic is second to none and that was very apparent.”

With both teams down a man for most of the game, they had to play in different formations and Spring Hill caught the Wildcats off guard for a goal late in the first half.

The Wildcats took a 2-1 lead at halftime and they continued the attack. Haight scored his second goal seven minutes into the second half and completed the hat trick with another goal a few minutes later.

Ryals sealed the win with his second goal late in the second half.

Against De Soto, the Wildcats had their chances in the two goal loss on the road, but unlike in their match with Spring Hill, they couldn’t convert.

“We played well enough to win, but unfortunately we were

unable to execute," Conley said. "We had four or five really, really good opportunities but we were unable to capitalize. I felt they did a nice job of making the most of their limited opportunities.

"It was a tough game all-around and had multiple questionable whistles. Our inability to execute though was the problem in the game for us. We will learn from this game and it will make us better."

Louisburg will try and get back on the winning track tonight when it hosts Baldwin. The varsity match is set to begin at 6 p.m.