

# White's two goals rally Wildcats past Leavenworth in opener



*Louisburg junior Emmett White celebrates his go-ahead goal late in the second half Tuesday against Leavenworth.*

For the first 60 minutes on Monday in its season opener, Louisburg had Leavenworth right where it wanted it.

The Wildcats led the Pioneers by a goal midway through the second half, and then the match became a fireworks show. Leavenworth scored twice to take the lead and turned the game on its head.

Then the match changed once again. Louisburg junior Emmett White answered back as he scored a pair of goals in the final 10 minutes to give the Wildcats a come-from-behind 3-2 victory over Leavenworth.

For a team that took the field with just two returning starters, and very little varsity experience, the Wildcats didn't let getting down late get to them.

"That's what the game is all about – overcoming adversity," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Starting off the year with a win was a major stepping stone for us. A lot of the guys were feeling nervous since it was the first varsity time many of them have played. Combine that with the natural jitters that athletes feel for their first game of the season,

and it can be an emotional ringer that they go through. I'm proud of how they played, holding onto the lead for most of the game, and then coming back after conceding two goals."

Leavenworth looked like it was going to spoil the Wildcats' opener with a pair of goals midway through the second half and took a 2-1 advantage. Time was running out on Louisburg.

White became the aggressor for the Wildcats as he scored the tying goal with 8 minutes remaining in the match on a through ball from sophomore Owen Marsh. Then two minutes later, White struck again.

He found himself at the top of the box as the ball came right at him and he struck it past the Pioneer goalie to put the Wildcats back on top for good.



***Louisburg senior John Powls heads the ball away in the box***

### ***Tuesday at home against Leavenworth.***

After just one match, White has already eclipsed his scoring mark from a year ago after getting shutout in that category.

“Emmett has already made a statement on offense this season,” Bovaird said. “He didn’t get any goals last year and only had two assists, but in one game he’s scored twice and was a solid presence in the midfield. If you were there and witnessed his playing, you could see the passion in his body language, his refusal to give up, and his leadership in front of his peers.”

Louisburg senior John Powls opened the scoring in the game’s first 10 minutes as he scored on a breakaway opportunity to give the Wildcats a 1-0 lead – an advantage they would hold for nearly 50 minutes.

In between that time, the Wildcats had opportunities to increase their lead as White had a potential goal that was taken away due to an offsides call.

White was also fouled near the box, and instead of being awarded a penalty kick, the ball was spotted just outside that took another scoring opportunity away.

Junior Colton Blue also had two shots on goal, including one that was stopped on a diving save by the Leavenworth keeper.

The Wildcat defense held strong for much of the contest and sophomore goalie Evan Moreland tallied four saves in his varsity debut.



***Louisburg senior Evan Moreland slides in for a diving save Tuesday against Leavenworth.***

It was a much-needed win and confidence builder for a team that had much of their roster play in its first-ever varsity contest.

“I told the guys before the game started that discipline is never pleasant,” Bovaird said. “In fact, it’s often painful, but those who remain true to their training will reap the benefits in the end. That’s our goal this season – pursuing excellence by focusing on the details and remaining disciplined throughout the game. We all know it’s almost a completely new team out there this year, but you can’t overlook the hard work that they’ve all put in during the off-season.

“All last year, we knew that there were 15 of our teammates who wouldn’t be coming back. This year’s squad is full of guys who truly believe they can step up and represent LHS on the

field. Monday's game wasn't the prettiest, and we witnessed some major things we need to work on fixing, but that's the easy part. These guys have already made the commitment to giving it all they've got."

Louisburg will try and build on this win tonight as the Wildcats travel to Independence for a 6 p.m. start.

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## Wildcat soccer features young roster for 2023 season



***Louisburg junior Emmett White is one of two returning starters for the Wildcats this season. White was named a team captain along with fellow juniors Colton Blue and Will Showalter.***

The Louisburg boys soccer team was one of the "older" teams in the Frontier League last season, if not in all of Class 4-1A.

The Wildcats featured a 15-member senior class that helped Louisburg to a spot in the regional championship. In 2023, they have now switched roles.

After losing nine starters to graduation, the Wildcats are one of the younger teams in the Frontier League and have just one senior this season.

It is quite the role reversal for the Wildcats as they enter

this season with just two returning starters. Still, head coach Bobby Bovaird believes the future is bright for his young squad.

“Last year’s senior group was a special one, and they’ve left some big shoes to fill,” Bovaird said. “We only have two returning starters, and there’s just a handful of players with substantial varsity time. Honestly, I feel like the juniors and sophomores have been really stepping up their game. They had some great leaders the past couple of years, and that will be key for them to transition into becoming leaders themselves.

“While we might not have a lot of high school varsity experience, we have guys on the field who are either very athletic or have some great soccer knowledge.”

Leading the way for the Wildcats this year will be a pair of juniors in midfielders Emmett White and Colton Blue. Each of those players have seen varsity time since their freshman year and were named team captains, along with fellow junior Will Showalter.

“Emmett, Will and Colton have grown and matured quite a bit in the past year,” Bovaird said. “Emmett and Colton are our two returning starters, and that will be invaluable experience for them as they step into their leadership roles. Will has been very active in the summer months with encouraging his teammates, leading through drills and games, and being a vocal leader. I’m excited to see these three as captains this year.”



***Louisburg junior Colton Blue is one of two returning starters for Louisburg this season.***

Despite having to fill a lot of spots vacated from last season, the Wildcats do have the numbers to fill them. They had 41 athletes that came out for the team, including a good number of freshmen to replace the outgoing senior class.

Although it could take time to get several new players used to the varsity level, Bovaird is pleased with the work his team has put in up to this point.

“Most of our team will be seeing their first varsity time this season,” Bovaird said. “They’ve had some great leaders come before them, but I believe that this year’s team will get things figured out. Their lack of varsity experience won’t be holding them back. All summer and for the start of the season, we’ve been working on a possession style of soccer. The idea

is to move off the ball, make runs to space, and let the ball do the work.

“We’ll be adjusting our formation a little bit this year as well. The thing about soccer is that our season is more of a marathon and less of a sprint. We’ll need to be patient and keep the bigger picture in mind.”

The strength of the team will be the midfield for the Wildcats as they return White, Blue and junior Jacob Brown, who all logged varsity minutes last season. Sophomores Caleb Feldkamp and Renner Erickson, along with freshmen Cody Courtney and Carter Schneider could also see varsity minutes.

At the attacking spots up top, senior John Pows, junior Jose Cuevas, along with sophomores Owen Marsh, Tanner LaBrie and freshman Brody Bovaird, will all see time at the forward positions.

Defensively, juniors Dan Minster, Ethan Sharp, Cole Clover and Showalter will look to anchor the Wildcat back line. Junior Mika McKitrick, sophomore Ryan Barbaric and freshman Fletcher Viterna could also see time there as well.

The Wildcats will also have a new face in goal this year. Sophomore Evan Moreland is the team’s new keeper after starting as the junior varsity goalie last season.

If having an inexperienced team wasn’t challenging enough, the Wildcats have also had to face off with Mother Nature.

Excessive heat warnings all week have pushed all practices to the early morning hours prior to school and they have shared the turf field with the football team.

It has been a unique start to the season, but one the Wildcat players have made the best out of in a tough situation.

“Going into the (last) weekend, I felt pretty good about everything, and then we got hit with the extreme heat,”

Bovaird said. "This week has been full of uncertainty and the guys have done a great job being flexible. We made things work Monday with some indoor conditioning in the morning and a short skills practice in the gym in the evening. We've had full practices the past three mornings on the turf, but we've had to share with the football team.

"Our grass game field has lights, but it isn't playable in the mornings due to the treatment schedule and the build-up of moisture in the morning. The guys are pretty excited – they have been working their tails off, and they want more time on the field."

They are going to get it Monday as the Wildcats open their season at home against Leavenworth. Varsity is set to begin at approximately 6 p.m., and junior varsity will begin at 4:30.

Their first road contest is Thursday when the Wildcats travel to Independence.

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## Wildcat fall teams underway with successful first week of practice



*Louisburg senior Wyatt Holland takes a handoff from backup quarterback Alex Saad during a practice last week.*

Before the record setting heat and humidity that is currently smothering Louisburg and the surrounding areas came in, the Wildcat fall sports teams got in a solid first five days of practice last week.

The first day of practice opened the fall season on Aug. 15 as the Wildcat football, boys soccer, cross country and volleyball programs officially kicked off the season.

Participation numbers were up for most of the sports, while football, soccer and cross country had a good week's worth of practice outdoors. With heat and humidity at record levels this week, all outdoor sports will be forced to hold practices early in the morning.

It was a successful season for all four teams last year and it started with the Wildcat football program as they ran through the Frontier League with an undefeated record and earned its first league title since 2018.

The Wildcats currently have 76 players out for football under second-year coach Drew Harding, which about 10 more than a year ago.

"First couple days of practice have been going well," Harding said. "There is a lot of energy on the field during practice, which is great to have. You can tell they are happy to be back playing football again."

Harding kept his players busy over the summer to help prep them for the season. The Wildcats took part in several scrimmages, 7-on-7 and skill sessions, to go along with their normal team camp and weights.

"This allowed everyone to get on the same page and be ready to roll once we started practice in the fall," Harding said. "The goal is that everything over the summer carries over and we can just continue to get better at what we do once the season starts."

“We want to continue to come together as a team and continue to build camaraderie. We also want to make sure we have the base schemes in all three phases installed and understood before we start putting in opponent specific plans. We want to see athletes compete and separate themselves from one another to show who is ready to play on Friday nights.”



***Louisburg sophomore Caileigh Kilgore goes through a hitting drill last week during tryouts.***

The Louisburg volleyball program is coming off another state tournament run that saw the Wildcats finish fourth at the Class 4A tourney. That success brought a lot of interest as 39 players tried out, and 32 are currently rostered between the three teams.

“The first three days of the season with tryouts were pretty great,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “Everyone came with positive attitudes and high energy to push through the challenges of tryouts. After the team was finalized, we got to

work right away on Thursday. The energy in the gym is great, and everyone is aware of the high expectations we have for ourselves heading into the season. Both the girls and the coaches are excited to be back in the gym getting better every day."

Wildcat volleyball also had a busy summer schedule the held a team camp to start, before competing in a summer league and held several open gyms in June and July.

Varsity level players traveled to the University of Nebraska team camp and also competed a tournament in Andale.

"While summer is busy with all kinds of activities, vacations and summer jobs, we appreciate the time and effort all of the girls put in to dedicate themselves to the team and the sport of volleyball," Willer said. "It also gives us coaches more time to get to know them heading into the season and to develop relationships earlier on so we can get right into volleyball here in August.

"During these first few weeks we hope to foster a culture of competition in our gym where the girls are all challenging each other every single day. We are all on the same page with where we want to be at the end of the season, so during these first few weeks we are focused on building a strong foundation that will help us get there with an emphasis on team bonding/connections, fundamentals, and conditioning."



***Louisburg senior Emma Vohs is a returning state medalist for the Louisburg cross country team.***

The Louisburg cross country team also had a big season last year, especially on the girls side. The Wildcat girls qualified for state and Emma Vohs left Wamego with a state medal.

As far as numbers go, the cross country group is a little down this year with 22, but they still have high aspirations again.

“The runners are excited for the season,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “The girls team is planning for big things again this year and the ‘young’ boys team is looking great.”

Many of those runners have taken to the streets over the summer to get their work in as they prepare for another difficult slate of meets in 2023.

“We had a consistent group of both LHS and LMS runners all summer,” Reece said. “Because of the good turnout, we can get

going on the harder workouts earlier in the season.

“The beginning of the season always creates a challenge with runners being at different points of their base building. We look to build base for all and start working on racing skills and workouts as the weeks progress.”



***Louisburg junior Emmett White goes through a drill last week at practice.***

The Louisburg soccer team will have some rebuilding to do this season as the Wildcats had to say goodbye to 15 seniors from a year ago.

There will certainly be several players to help fill the void as 41 athletes came out for soccer this fall.

“There’s been a huge precedent set with the program, and it’s definitely something that’s been instilled in the players for quite some time,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Since I’ve joined the program, the junior and senior leaders have

been outstanding at organizing summer workouts and activities for the team. It's been great seeing that sort of self-motivation and leadership from them. We've had enough time together as a program over the summer that the first days of tryouts have been smooth as can be. Very little instruction needed, and the guys have been able to jump right in with what we're asking from them."

The Wildcats opened their summer hosting a youth camp and then went right in to summer workouts. Louisburg also held its annual team camp to go along with weights sessions.

"With only two returning starters from last year, we're going to have some growing pains for sure," Bovaird said. "The first couple of weeks will need to be spent getting in match shape and gelling as a team with so many players being in new positions or at a new level. We open our season with Leavenworth, who was our final regular season game last year. Back then, both varsity and JV had awesome games, but those were totally different teams. We'll see how well we've reloaded for this year, but I'm feeling pretty good."

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## **Klugman looking forward to joining Barton Community College soccer**



***Louisburg's Brecon Klugman will look to improve in goal this upcoming season with the Barton Community College soccer program. Klugman is coming off a senior season where he helped the Wildcats to the regional title game.***

Brecon Klugman didn't grow up wanting to play soccer in college, and it wasn't until his junior year of high school that he even knew much about the goalie position.

However, after a successful senior season in goal with the Louisburg High School program, Klugman has gotten the chance to take his talent to the collegiate level.

A series of events led him to Barton Community College, where he will join the Cougars next fall in hopes of growing even more in the sport. Klugman signed his letter of intent with the school late last spring.

"I am very blessed and honored to play at this high of a level coming from Louisburg," Klugman said. "Right after junior year, I felt like if I wanted to play college soccer I had to put in a lot of work in the off season and my teammates are part of the reason why I have gotten better. During that off-season we would go to the field every other day kicking the ball around. It just built such a special bond between all of us."

Klugman had never played in goal at the high school level prior to his junior season and didn't come with much knowledge of the position. After serving as the JV goalie as a junior, a starting spot opened up for his senior season and the rest is history.

He helped the Wildcats to the regional championship game and caught the eyes of a lot of coaches around the Frontier League.



***Brecon Klugman signed his letter of intent to play at Barton late last spring. Seated next to Brecon are his parents Joanna and Kory Klugman. Standing (from left) is Louisburg head coach Bobby Bovaird and assistant Ben York.***

In his first year as a varsity goalie, Klugman thrived for the Wildcats as he finished with 113 saves and finished with six shutouts on the season. His save number was the second highest total in program history for a season.

That earned him second team All-Frontier League honors and was also named honorable mention all-state.

“Playing goalie is one of the best decisions I’ve ever made,” Klugman said. “In high school there were always ups and downs, but I learned a lot and still need improvement. The Barton goalkeepers that were there last year are back and they will help me get better.”

Klugman will join a very successful Barton program as the Cougars finished as the No. 11 team in the nation and were the Jayhawk West Conference Champions.

With all that success, Klugman is excited to get going with his new team.

“The people at Barton just welcomed me in such a nice way and the coach is a very cool guy to be around,” Klugman said. “Also, being able to play for one of the best JUCO soccer teams is just special and cannot wait for the season to start.”

Klugman knows he will have to pay his dues to get the playing time he is hoping for, but he is looking forward to the journey that lies ahead.

“For right now I expect myself to get some playing time in the spring in exhibition matches and then hope to start by my sophomore year,” he said. “I’m super excited to meet so many new people, teammates and getting on the campus.”

As exciting as his future is, Klugman relishes his time with the Wildcat program as it put him on his current trajectory.

“I will never forget when I asked my teammates on the last day of tryouts my junior year if I should tryout for goalie and it was a now or never situation,” Klugman said. “They encouraged me at the last second to do so. I am very grateful for all my teammates, coach (Bobby) Bovaird and coach (Ben) York. I have gotten to learn so much from them and they have put me on this path to getting better at the sport I love most.”

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## **Espina-Roca excited to join MidAmerica Nazarene soccer**



***Toby Espina-Roca played a big role for the Louisburg boys soccer team the last few years and he is hoping to do the same at MidAmerica Nazarene.***

Toby Espina-Roca has had a ball at his feet ever since he was five years old.

Growing up in Argentina, soccer – or futbol – was something that became a passion of his and it was easy to see why. Soccer is probably the most popular sport in many countries outside the United States, including Argentina.

After moving to the United States later in life, the love for the sport continued to grow. Espina-Roca always wanted the opportunity to play past high school level.

With four years of the Louisburg High School program under his belt, Espina-Roca caught the eyes of a few coaches, including those at MidAmerica Nazarene University.

So much so that they offered him spot with the Pioneers and the rest is history. Espina-Roca signed with MidAmerica Nazarene last spring and is gearing up to join the program this upcoming season.

“For me to sign at the college level was a huge accomplishment and it was one of my main goals ever since I came to the U.S.,” Espina-Roca said. “I think the coaches and players at MidAmerica see me as a good fit. When I practiced with them, everyone seemed to enjoy being there and also how how successfully they are by just wanting it more than others.”

The Pioneers were one of the top teams in the Heart of America

Conference last season as they finished with a 14-4-3 record and earned a spot in the national tournament.



***Louisburg's Toby Espina-Roca signed his letter of intent last spring to play soccer at MidAmerica Nazarene University. Seated next to Toby are his parents Valeria Roca and Marcelo Espina. Standing (from left) is Louisburg head coach Bobby Bovaird, Toby's grandmother Gladys Lambertucci and Louisburg assistant coach Ben York.***

MidAmerica is hoping Espina-Roca can fit right in to their winning culture and he will look to play on the defensive side for the Pioneers.

"They see me as a player with good potential and they've seen how I fit in with some of the guys already due to a lot being hispanic," Espina-Roca said. "As of now I will be in my natural position, which is right-back, but in the future that might change."

Espina-Roca was a big part of the Wildcat soccer program for the last three seasons. He started as a defender his sophomore and junior seasons, before switching to the midfield this past year.

In his senior campaign, he earned second team All-Frontier League and all-state honors as he tallied six goals and five assists for the Wildcats.

“Louisburg has helped me become the person I am today,” Espina-Roca said. “Looking back at those summer training sessions and conditioning nights, everything was worth it. I’m forever thankful for all the memories that were made with past teammates and coaches. I’ve had two great head coaches and amazing assistant coaches who helped me become the player and person I am today, and that will always be in my heart.”

Now he is ready to see what he can accomplish with the Pioneers and he is looking forward to the challenge of playing at the college level.

“My goals for my first year is mainly to put the hard work in,” Espina-Roca said. “I really wanna get varsity minutes and I’ve been preparing myself for that, but to also enjoy the first year and make great memories out of it. I can’t wait until the first practices start. It’s something I’m really looking forward to.”

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## 2023 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year Nominees



For the sixth consecutive year, Louisburg Sports Zone will be handing out an Athlete of the Year honor to a male and female athlete at Louisburg High School. I wanted the opportunity to

recognize those who exemplify what it means to be an “athlete.”

Although I am giving out the award, I wanted the process to be subjective, so I asked the head coaches at LHS to help me out. I asked each coach to send me nominations of who they thought exemplified the Athlete of the Year honor. They will then vote for their top 3 male and female athletes and then I will tabulate the results and determine the winner. The winner will be announced in the coming days.

Below are the nominees for the Male Athlete of the Year award in alphabetical order by last name. Congrats to all those who were nominated and best of luck!



## **Kaven Bartlett – Senior – Wrestling and Soccer**

Kaven Bartlett competed on the Louisburg wrestling and boys soccer team, but Bartlett was a fixture on the mat for the Wildcat wrestling program.

Bartlett qualified for state at 138 pounds and became a 3-time state qualifier for Louisburg and was a state medalist in 2022. He finished with a 119-45 career record and was a two-time team captain and four-year letter winner. Those 119 wins are fifth in program history and he has 158 career takedowns and 726.5 career points, which is both third in team history. He was named the 2023 LHS Wrestler of the Year.

Bartlett was also a defender on the Wildcat soccer team his past season. The Wildcats advanced to the regional championship game.



## **Declan Battle – Junior – Football and Baseball**

Declan Battle had big seasons for both the Wildcat football and baseball programs.

Under the lights on the football field, Battle was the Wildcat starting quarterback as he led his team to an undefeated

Frontier League championship. The dual-threat quarterback scored 23 total touchdowns and totaled more than 1,700 yards. That performance led him to a first-team All-Frontier League, along with all-state honors.

On the diamond, Battle was the Wildcats' starting centerfielder and leadoff hitter. He scored 32 runs on the year, which is a Wildcat program record. Battle also recorded a .429 average to go along with five doubles and three triples. He also stole 17 bases. His performance also earned him second team All-Frontier League and all-state honors.



## **Mason Dobbins – Senior – Football, Basketball and Track and Field**

Louisburg senior Mason Dobbins was a fixture for three Wildcat programs this past season. Dobbins was the starting wide receiver on the football field, starting forward on the basketball team and a state medalist for the track program.

Dobbins stood out the most in the track and field arena. He qualified for state in four events and medaled in all four as

he helped the Wildcats to a state runner-up finish this past May.

Dobbins won the state championship in the high jump, and earlier in the year, broke the school record with a jump of 6 feet, 7 inches. He was a state runner-up in the 110-meter hurdles and also took third in the 200-meter dash. He was also a part of the 4×100-meter relay that also medaled third and set a new school record earlier in the year. In all, Dobbins has won nine state medals in his Wildcat career.

On the football field, Dobbins earned first team All-Frontier League honors at wide receiver with 25 catches, 382 yards and four touchdowns. He also earned honorable mention all-state honors.

On the basketball court, Dobbins was named to the All-Frontier League defensive team. He led the Wildcats with 7.6 rebounds a game to go along with 1.5 steals and 1 block per contest.



# **Cade Gassman – Senior – Soccer, Basketball and Track and Field**

Cade Gassman was a starter, or key contributor, for three Wildcat programs during 2022-23 school year. Gassman was the starting midfielder and captain for the soccer team, starting guard on the basketball court and a jumper for the track and field program.

Gassman made his biggest impact on the pitch for Louisburg. As a midfielder, Gassman drew a lot of attention from the opposition as he finished with five goals and four assists on the season to lead the Wildcats to the regional title match. In his career, he is one of the more prolific scorers in school history.

The Louisburg senior finished with 47 career goals, which is second in program history and was third in school history with 26 career assists. His 120 career points is also second in Wildcat history. He is a four-time all-state and all-Frontier League first team selection.

On the hardwood, Gassman was the starting guard for the Wildcats and he recorded 39 rebounds and had 22 assists to go along with 14 steals. On the track, Gassman was a state qualifier in the high jump for Louisburg and finished 11th overall at state.



## Nathan Vincent, Senior, Football and Track and Field

Louisburg senior Nathan Vincent played big roles for both the Wildcat football team and track and field program. Vincent was a starting lineman for the Wildcat football team and a state medalist in track.

On the football field, Vincent started on both sides of the ball as he earned all-state and all league honors. He finished with 80 tackles as a defensive end to go along with 6.5 sacks and 8.5 tackles for a loss. Vincent was a key member of the offensive line as he helped the Wildcats to more than 33 points per game. He earned first team all-league offensive league honors and second team-defense. He also recorded first team all-state honors and was selected to play in the Kansas Shrine Bowl.

Vincent was the Wildcats' top thrower for the track and field program. Vincent recorded three state medals as he helped

Louisburg to a state runner-up team finish. At state, Vincent medaled third in the shot put, fifth in the discus and sixth in the javelin. In all, Vincent has won five career state medals, with three coming in the javelin.



## **Colyer Wingfield, Senior, Basketball, Track and Field**

Louisburg senior Colyer Wingfield had a big season for both the Wildcat basketball team and track program. Wingfield was the leading scorer for the Wildcat basketball program, and was a part of two state relays in track.

Wingfield earned a lot of success on the hardwood as he was named to the All-Frontier League second team. He led the Wildcats in scoring at 17.4 points per game and pulled down nearly six rebounds a contest.

On the track, Wingfield helped the 4×100 relay and 4×400 relay to state medals as both finished third at the state meet last

month. The 4×100 relay set a new school record in the process. He also did the long and triple jumps for the Wildcats.

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## **Pfannenstiel named new LHS AD; resigns boys basketball post**



*Louisburg boys basketball coach Ty Pfannenstiel will take over the school's activities director role next school year. He also resigned his basketball position after coaching the Wildcats for the last six years.*

Beginning next school year, Louisburg High School activities will have a little different look to it – especially at the top.

Ty Pfannenstiel will serve as the school's new activities director and will take over for current AD, Michael Pickman, who will focus on his assistant principal duties and curriculum.

Pfannenstiel, who has been the boys basketball coach for the last six years, resigned his post to take on the activities director position. He also stepped down as an assistant football coach.

Currently the weight room instructor, Pfannenstiel will spend half his day teaching and the other half in the AD role.

All of the moves were approved during Monday's meeting of the USD 416 Board of Education.

"This is very exciting for me," Pfannenstiel said. "It's definitely going to be a change. I have been a teacher and a coach for 18 years. I still get to be a teacher half-time, and now I get to step into a new role as an administrator. It is going to be all sports and activities and I am looking forward to the new direction."

As for Pickman, he gets the opportunity to focus more on the academic side as a full-time assistant principal. He was hired as an assistant principal/ activities director in April of 2020.

"I am very excited to commit more fully to the assistant principal role as education and curriculum have always been my true passion," Pickman said. "Being able to support the teachers, students, and administrative staff by providing data, feedback, and assessing teaching and learning goals and initiatives in the building and district aligns with that passion and the opportunity arose to allow for that. I hope to enable and promote continued growth in the various curriculums and initiatives and structures that make Louisburg a fantastic district in a supportive community."

"Ty has experience and is passionate about athletics and activities. As it is where his passion is, I have every confidence he will do a fantastic job in his new role and look forward to witnessing where he takes our programs moving forward."

Pickman took over LHS activities at a difficult time as the school was coming back from COVID-19 and the all challenges it presented. As tough as that situation was, he appreciated the relationships he built.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my role as activities director and was presented a fantastic growth opportunity and am grateful for being given it," Pickman said. "I had a goal of being present for athletes and coaches and for the patrons, so I hope people saw that presence. I was blessed to have great leadership in place in our coaches and sponsors, and tried to support them best by advocating for their needs and supporting them to do their job of being great role models and passing on their passion and knowledge to students.

"Ultimately, I am most proud of our student athletes and activity participants and being part of their journey. I believe that sports are an extension of the classroom and I wanted to help ensure that character and sportsmanship were just as important and success, and I am overjoyed to have a wealth of memories where our fans, students, participants, and coaches and sponsors proved that to be true of LHS."

While taking on the challenge of being a new administrator is one he is looking forward to, leaving his coaching roots behind was a difficult decision for Pfannenstiel.

In 2021, Pfannenstiel led the Wildcat boys basketball team to the Class 4A state championship game and finished as the state runner-up.

"That was definitely the biggest thing that was holding me back," Pfannenstiel said. "I love basketball and the kids that I have worked with. There is a group coming up that I really enjoy coaching, and leaving that behind was one of the biggest challenges for me. Whoever takes over the program, I think it will be good transition for them because they will have a great group of kids to work with.

"Originally, I was going to be allowed to coach a sport and they didn't want to take coaching away from me. The more I thought about it, if I want to do a good job at this, I need to focus on being the AD and that will be something that will

benefit me and all the other activities.”

Pfannenstiel believes the move is a good one for the school in general as it will allow Pickman and principal Amy VanRheen to focus more on the academic side of things.

“This is something that is definitely needed,” Pfannenstiel said. “Our administrators are so busy with all the stuff they do during the school day, but they are also going to all the activities as well. Hopefully this will be a big help for Mrs. VanRheen and Mr. Pickman.”

Although he won’t official start his new position till next school year, Pfannenstiel is already starting to transition into his new role – one that is looking forward to.

“My job in the weight room and coaching has all been about sports,” he said. “That is what entices me about this job is that I am still going to be all about sports and activities. I just want to be a support for our coaches and our athletes and be advocate for our students.”

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## Gassman ready to take next step with JCCC soccer program



*Louisburg senior Cade Gassman recently signed his letter of intent to play for the Johnson County Community College men’s*

## ***soccer program.***

Ever since Cade Gassman walked onto the pitch for the Louisburg soccer team as a freshman, he has made a huge impact for the Wildcats.

Whether it was helping Louisburg to its best finish in program history, or earning countless postseason honors, Gassman certainly left his mark on the Wildcat program.

Starting next fall, the Louisburg senior hopes to do the same at the collegiate level.

Earlier this year, Gassman signed his letter of intent to join the Johnson County Community College men's soccer program and will go from being a Wildcat to a Cavalier.

"I've always wanted to play soccer as long as I can and I realized It was possible to get to the next level my freshman year of high school," Gassman said. "It meant a lot to me and my family when we signed and saw that dream come true."

Gassman has played the sport since he was 5-years-old and has slowly seen him develop into an all-state player for Louisburg. He hopes to take that next step at JCCC.

Before he committed, however, Gassman already had an inside knowledge of the Cavalier soccer program. His older sister, Carlee, played there so Cade had a chance to get to know the school first-hand.

So when JCCC coach Jeff Cole made Cade an offer, it was hard for him to pass it up.



***Louisburg senior Cade Gassman signed to play with the JCCC men's soccer program. Sitting next to Cade are his parents Tara and Brent Gassman. Standing (from left) is his sister Carlee, head coach Bobby Bovaird and sister Bree.***

"Going to her games, the facilities were brand new and nice and after (Cole) reached out and gave me an offer, it was the best fit for me," Cade said. "I had many of my club teammates playing at JCCC and friends I've made over time. I heard lots of great things."

During his time with the Louisburg program, Gassman finished his Wildcat career with 47 goals and 26 assists. He was also a four-time first team All-Frontier League and all-state player.

A season ago, he also helped the Wildcats to a third place finish in the Class 4-1A state tournament – the best finish in school history.

"I'm so excited to see what Cade is able to accomplish at the next level," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "He's been such an incredible leader on the field – at many times, he's been like a third coach with how he works with his teammates."

His positivity is infectious and he's got such an uncanny work ethic. Combine those two traits with his natural talent, and you get a kid like Cade.

"JCCC is picking up a pretty special player with him, that's for sure. Not only is he a very talented player, but he's extremely coachable and was always willing to listen to suggestions I might have had. With a growth mindset like Cade has, he will definitely find even more success at the college level."

Gassman has high hopes for what he can accomplish with the Cavalier program and is excited to work under head coach Jeff Cole.

"The JCCC program, as far as culture, is good and went very far in the playoffs last season," Cade said "As far as playing style, I will have to see when I get there but I know coach Cole with his previous experience at UMKC will have a high level approach to how we play. My goal is to work my way to the starting 11 and win the NJCAA national championship."

As for his time in Louisburg, Gassman is grateful for everything the program did for him and for all the experiences he leaves with.

"The soccer program means a lot to me," he said. "It has given me a great work ethic and allowed me to be a better leader and teammate. It has definitely bettered me as a player and a teammate."

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# Top 10 Louisburg Sports Stories of 2022



It was a successful, and eventful, 2022 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 a few programs brought back state hardware.

Below are the top stories from 2022, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the writeup is the link to the actual story from the event.

When putting the list together, I took a lot of things into account – whether it was team vs. individual, popularity of the sport, historical achievements and the interest it drew on the web site.

This year was a blast to cover and I am looking forward to seeing what 2023 will bring. Thank you to everyone for their support and can't wait for it all to begin again.



## 10. Louisburg golf qualifies for state

FORT SCOTT – As the scores were rolling in, the Louisburg golf team was a little worried.

The Wildcats were in jeopardy of not qualifying for state after a few of the golfers didn't have the scores they were hoping for in the Class 4A regional tournament in Fort Scott.

Chanute and Independence had already assured themselves of a spot, but the third place team was up in the air as the top three teams automatically qualify for state.

As it turned out, the Wildcats had nothing to worry about as they edged Paola by four strokes to finish in third with a 357 to secure their third consecutive spot in the 4A state tournament.

Seniors A.J. Arriola, Sam Wheeler, Ian Kirkpatrick, Johnny Thompson, along with juniors Jackson Olson and Nick Lancaster, advanced to the state tournament.

Arriola carded a 78 and finished as a regional runner-up, as he was just two strokes behind regional champion Drayton Cleaver of Chanute.

As for Olson, the Louisburg junior set a personal record by six strokes to shoot an 81 and took fourth overall. Those personal bests were enough to get the Wildcats into that third place spot.

At state, Arriola and Wheeler finished as the team's top two golfers. Arriola carded a 97 to take 59th overall, while Wheeler finished with a 98 and came in 66th.



## **9. Brueggen's earns school's first state swim medal**

LENEXA – Even though she is just a freshman, Sabra Brueggen is already putting a stamp on her high school swim career at Louisburg High School.

It all came to a rousing end on May 21 as Brueggen earned her first state medal at the Class 5-1A Kansas State Swim and

Diving Championships at the Shawnee Mission School District Aquatic Center.

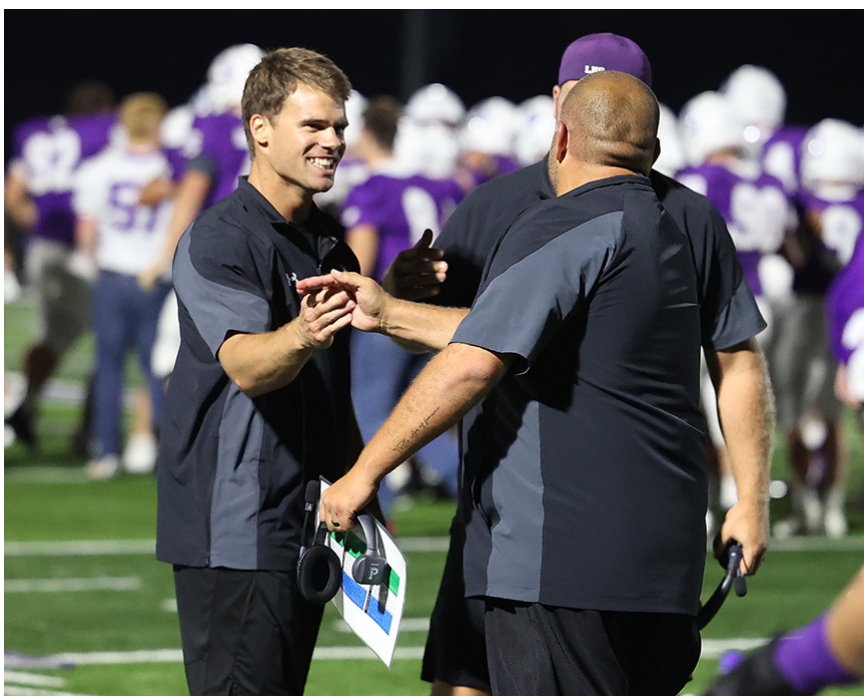
Brueggen became the first swimmer in school history to earn a state medal as she finished fifth in the 100-yard backstroke in 1:00.58.

On the day before in the preliminaries, Brueggen also took fifth in a season-best time of 1:00.15.

“Medaling as freshman means the world to me, and it proves to me that all of my hard work for all of these years, has paid off,” Brueggen said. “I feel like I performed my absolute best at state, and I was very happy with the results. It gives me confidence that I will have a bright future representing OzPaLou at the state swim meets.”

She nearly had a second medal in the 50 freestyle. Brueggen put together a season-best time of 25.26 seconds, but finished ninth overall. It was the same finish she had the in the preliminaries.

The top eight in each event earn a state medal as she was just .06 away from earning another spot on the medal stand.



## 8. Harding takes over as Wildcat football coach

The Louisburg football program had a different leader on the sidelines this past season.

The USD 416 Board of Education approved the hire of LHS assistant coach Drew Harding to be the team's new head coach in January after the district decided not to renew the contract of former coach Robert Ebenstein.

Harding spent the last five seasons as a Wildcat assistant coach, including time as a defensive coordinator. He is a 2010 Louisburg graduate and was a big part of the Wildcat program during his time as a student-athlete at Louisburg High School.

However, Harding didn't see himself be a head coach of any sport coming out of college.

"It means a lot," Harding said. "When I got out of school, I didn't get into education right away and started somewhere else. I decided to get into education because of the impact my former coaches at Louisburg had on me. To come full circle and to be in the position that I am in now, is pretty surreal. I am really excited for the opportunity and hopefully I can have the same type of impact on student athletes as they come through the program."

Ebenstein has been the head coach the last five seasons and helped the Wildcats to a 30-18 record during that time, including a Frontier League and regional title in 2018. He had a winning record three of those five seasons.

He was also named the KFCA Coach of the Year during that season and was selected to be an assistant coach for the Kansas Shrine Bowl. He was an assistant coach for the Wildcat program for five years before earning the head coaching job.



## 7. Conley resigns a Louisburg head boys and girls soccer coach

Louisburg High School head boys and girls soccer coach Kyle Conley stepped down from his position after seven years.

He was recently hired to lead the boys and girls soccer programs at Blue Valley West, where he will serve as the head coach of both teams.

Conley, who also taught social studies at LHS, informed the players and parents of his decision on May 4. The Blue Valley Board of Education approved his hire on May 9.

“Making the decision to leave Louisburg was extremely difficult,” Conley said. “The players and parents, both past and present, made this decision tough. No parents or players caused this decision. I am very thankful to Mr. (Dave) Tappan and Mr. (Darin) Gagnebin for giving me this opportunity to coach and teach at Louisburg. The amount of support that my

teams, my family and I received from Louisburg soccer parents and the community was incredible.”

Bobby Bovaird was hired as the new boys head coach, while Ben York returned to the program as the new assistant. York was also named the girls head coach after serving 13 years as the boys head coach previous to Conley.

Conley has the been head girls coach at Louisburg since its inception in 2016 and has led that program to four consecutive state final fours.

Twice, the Wildcats made the state championship game and finished runner-up on both occasions. He has guided the program to an 82-34-3 record.

Conley took over the boys program in 2016 and finished with a 77-32-3 record. He led the Wildcats to two state final fours during that span, including a third place finish in 2020.

“I am so proud of the things that our student athletes in the soccer programs have accomplished both on and off the soccer field,” Conley said. “I will always cherish the memories that we have made here with the Louisburg soccer programs.”



## **6. Girls cross country qualifies for state, Vohs earns state medal**

WAMEGO – For the second consecutive season, Emma Vohs left the Class 4A state cross country meet with more than was she arrived with.

Vohs earned her second state medal at Wamego Country Club as she finished 10th overall with a time of 20 minutes and 51 seconds. The Louisburg junior did what she set out to accomplish.

“I was so excited to win another state medal this season and couldn’t be happier that I reached my goal for that race, which was placing top 10,” Vohs said. “The race was a tougher course, as was the competition this year, but I am blessed to run with such talented girls that push me to do better each race.”

Vohs led the Lady Cat team that qualified for state for the sixth consecutive season. As a team, Louisburg finished eighth overall with 208 points.

A week earlier at regionals, the team of Vohs, Maddy Rhamy, Lola Edwards, Nova Ptacek, Bree Gassman, Erin Apple and Madison Huggins finished third to punch their ticket to state

“It never gets old seeing the joy in the team’s eyes when they hear they qualified for state,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “The girls work hard to accomplish this goal each year, and because of their dedication to their sport, they achieve great things even if they might not make it, but they did.

“The program has built itself and I’m just glad to be a part of it. Yes, we put together a training plan to accomplish great things at the end of the season, but the runners do the work to get there. It takes self discipline, motivation and

guts to be there at the end of the season.”



## 5. Wildcat wrestling medals 3 at state

Louisburg wrestling has had its fair share of state medalists in its long history, but what the Wildcats accomplished in February at the Tony’s Pizza Events Center in Salina was something the program had never seen before.

The Wildcats left the Class 4A state tournament with three state medalists, the most for one year in program history.

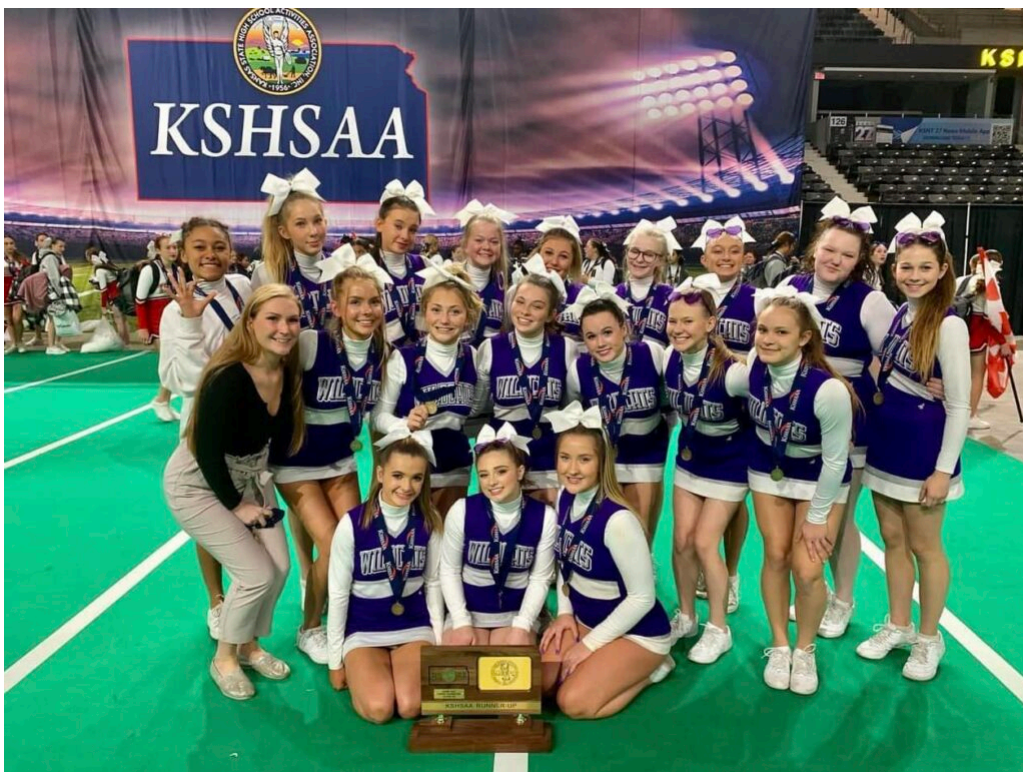
Aiden Barker (195 pounds), Kaven Bartlett (126) and Elijah Eslinger (285) each finished in the top six in their respective weight classes and put together their best performances of the season. It was also the first time each of them earned a state medal.

“This season was the most state placers we’ve had in a single year in program history,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Prior to 1992, KSHSAA only medaled the top 4 in each weight. In both 1988 and 1989, we had two top-4 placers and one top-6 placer, but this really shows how the program is progressing

and developing. We nearly had four medalists, too.”

Barker, a senior, was a favorite for a medal heading into Salina and finished fifth overall with a 13-1 major decision over Ottawa’s Jared Ferguson in the fifth-place match.

Bartlett and Eslinger also left lasting impressions on the Wildcat program as each medaled sixth overall after both nearly turned their brackets upside down as they advanced to the semifinals on Friday. They both guaranteed themselves a medal on the first day.



## **4. Louisburg cheer earns state runner-up performance**

TOPEKA – It has almost become commonplace to see the Louisburg High School cheer squad in the finals of the Class 4A Gameday Spirit Showcase.

However, that doesn’t mean the cheerleaders are any less excited about it.

For the second straight season, the Wildcats finished as the state runner-up in the Class 4A competition at the Stormont-Vail Events Center. They finished with a score of 79.45 and were one point behind champion Paola.

It is the fourth straight season that the Wildcats have finished in the top three, which included a state championship in 2019.

"I am so unbelievably and incredibly proud of this team," Louisburg coach Marissa Morrow said. "This positivity and attitude that these girls have shown this year have been the key to our success. I had no doubt that the material and performances we brought on Saturday had the potential to do well, but it was the girls who made it possible to pull it together. They were all such competitors and left it all out on the mat, and I couldn't ask for more. We also could not have done it without the support of our amazing cheer families."

Members of the team are Sydney Dudzik, Bella Feikert, Zoe Cutshaw, Caroline Dugger, Elizabeth George, Addison Drake, Brooklyn Harmon, Adison Vargo, Maddy Carpenter-Ross, Sienna Finch, Alayna Stohs, Alaina Dudzik, Maddie O'Keefe, Liz Willming, Kayleigh Ramsey, Taryn Osborn, Anna Brizendine and Jocelyn Burk.



### 3. LHS football secures Frontier League title

With just over a minute left in regulation, Louisburg was staring at the possibility of their first league loss and was watching an outright Frontier League title slip away.

Spring Hill scored a touchdown and took a four-point lead with 1 minute and 12 seconds left. Things were looking bleak for the Wildcats.

As it turned out, 52 seconds was all the Wildcats needed to pull off one of the season's most memorable moments. Louisburg quarterback Declan Battle found junior Caden Caplinger in the endzone on an 18-yard touchdown pass with 20 seconds remaining to give the Wildcats a 20-17 victory.

The win was the Wildcats' seventh straight on the season and clinched the team's first Frontier League championship since 2018.

“There weren’t a lot of people who thought we could be league champions,” Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. “I don’t think it was anything that people expected out of us, and the Frontier League is really good. For this group to come to work, get better every day and to see success is pretty sweet.”

The win was extra special for 16 Louisburg seniors as they were also able to celebrate that league title on Senior Night.

Jackson Kush, Nathan Apple, Carson Wade, Isaiah Whitley, Riley Van Eaton, J.R. Rooney, Will Hutsell, Brayton Brueggen, Christian Golladay, Nathan Vincent, Jase Hovey, Mack Newell, Hunter Moore, Mason Dobbins, Corbin Hamman and Layne Ryals all got to end their final regular season home game with a win.

“The Frontier League title means so much to me and this team,” Rooney said. “As a team before the season, the seniors wrote down our goals, and league champs was on everyone’s list. To clinch it on senior night was amazing. Going undefeated at home, to win it on our field in front of our town – it was an indescribable feeling.”



## 2. Wildcat volleyball finishes fourth at state

HUTCHINSON – The state tournament ended the way it started for the Louisburg volleyball team – with a loss to Towanda-Circle.

Still, it was everything that happened in between that made for a lot of lasting memories for the Wildcat players.

Louisburg went 2-1 in pool play at the Hutchinson Sports Arena, which included a revenge win over Tonganoxie in the final match of the day. That gave the Lady Cats a spot in the state semifinals Saturday, where they finished fourth in Class 4A.

The Wildcats suffered a 2-0 loss to both Bishop Miege and Circle, but they still ended their season as one of the state's top teams.

"I am extremely proud of this team," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "Looking at how we started this season, and our ups and downs along the way, it is a huge accomplishment for them to have come together as a team at the end of the season and play our best volleyball yet. It was apparent in the last couple of weeks that they really started playing for each other and capitalizing on the strong team bonds they built throughout the year."

It was all thanks to an upset the previous week. Louisburg defeated the state's No. 1 seed, Baldwin, in the sub-state championship match to earn the state berth.

The Wildcats, the No. 9 seed, knocked off No. 1 seed Baldwin, 25-18 and 25-19, at Baldwin High School in the finals of the Class 4A sub-state tournament. That win puts Louisburg in the state tournament for the first time since 2019.

Members of the team are Emma Prettyman, Adyson Ross, Claire

Brown, Allie Kennedy, Ashlyn Berck, Delaney Nelson, Izzy Moreland, Bronwynn Williams, Caileigh Kilgore, Megan Quinn, Hailey Sword and Madelyn Williams.



# **1. Wildcat boys take third at state track; Koontz, Caplinger win state titles; Lady Cats medal nine**

WICHITA – For the second consecutive season, the Louisburg boys track and field team brought home hardware from the Class 4A state meet.

After winning the state championship in 2021, the Wildcats once again found their way to the podium in Wichita as they finished third overall with 67 points.

Andale won the state championship with 101 points and Chanute was the state runner-up with 71.

Louisburg got points from a lot of different areas as the Wildcats medaled in 10 events and had 12 medalists overall, including all three of their relays.

Louisburg senior Tom Koontz won a pair of state titles in the hurdles, while sophomore Caden Caplinger captured the gold medal in the pole vault.



“I am not going to complain at all,” Koontz said. “I believe we came here with less people than we did last year and everyone did their best. Even though we didn’t get exactly what we wanted, third place is still a great achievement.”

What he couldn’t believe was he had just won his first state title in the 300 hurdles and Koontz did so by breaking a 14-year-old school record. Koontz ran a time of 38.98 seconds to break R.J. Saunders’ record of 39.16 set in 2008 to earn the gold.

It turned out to be his second state title of the day as he also earned the gold medal in the 110-meter high hurdles with a time of 14.61 seconds. Koontz won the state in that event last season as well.

Caplinger cleared a lot of his marks in the pole vault and did so in convincing fashion as he was able to win a state title in just his second year with the program.



Last season at state, Caplinger medaled eighth after he cleared 12-6. A year later, the Louisburg sophomore improved his mark by two feet and is a state champion.

It was an impressive showing from Caplinger as he didn't miss an attempt until he tried for 15 feet at the end. He entered the competition at 12-6 and had five straight successful clearances.

"At first I was really nervous, but then it just kind of turned into a routine thing," Caplinger said. "I started going over heights consistently and the rest just kind of fell into place. I cleared 14-6 earlier this week twice in a row, so I knew I could do it. I was still a little nervous though."

As for the Lady Cats, Delaney Wright left the state meet with three medals. Wright, who has been coming back from a severe injury for most of the season, finished as the state runner-up

in the 400-meter dash, third place in the 200 dash and fifth in the long jump.

A season ago, Wright was the state champion in all three events, but couldn't get the repeat she was hoping for.



"Going into state I knew I still wasn't where I want to be due to my injury a couple months ago," Wright said. "But I wanted to attack it still and give it all I had. I am blessed I was there to compete and earn three medals cause in the beginning I didn't even know if I was going to compete my senior year."

In all, the Lady Cats put together a strong state performance as they medaled in nine events and finished with 40 team points and took sixth overall. They were just eight points away from the third place spot, and a plaque.

"Once again the state qualifiers did an amazing job," Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. "They all performed well and most beyond expectations. To leave the meet finishing in sixth place was outstanding. We left with lots of medals and great memories."

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# Six Wildcats named to all-state team; McManigal, Gassman selected first team



*Louisburg seniors Cade Gassman, Colin McManigal, Toby Espina-Roca, Brecon Klugman, Matthew Sword and Gavin York were all named to the KHSSCA all-state team.*

The season may be over, but members of the Louisburg boys soccer team are still getting recognized for a strong 2022 campaign.

Six Wildcats were named to the Class 4-1A All-State team by the Kansas High School Soccer Coaches Association on Nov. 18.

A pair of Wildcats were recognized among the best as seniors Colin McManigal and Cade Gassman were selected to the all-state first team. Senior Toby Espina-Roca was a second team honoree, while Brecon Klugman, Matthew Sword and Gavin York were named as honorable mentions.

The same six players were also given All-Frontier League honors earlier this month.

Gassman earned first team honors for the fourth time in his high school career and has been a fixture on the Wildcat team since his freshman season.

This season, Gassman finished with five goals and four assists, but he was a valuable piece to the team at controlling play in the midfield and starting attacks.

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Espina-Roca moved to the midfield this season for Louisburg after spending the last three years on the defensive side. He was also an integral part of the Wildcat team as he finished with six goals and five assists.

In his first year as a varsity goalie, Klugman thrived for the Wildcats as he finished with 113 saves and finished with six shutouts on the season. His save number was the second highest total in program history for a season.

Sword and York were key pieces on the Wildcat back line as they turned away several attacks and helped keep games close. York made the move to defense halfway through the season after seeing time at forward to start the year.

The two players led the Wildcat defense against some difficult opponents and were big in helping Klugman throughout the season.