

# Wildcats win fourth straight in league opener at Bonner Springs



***Louisburg junior Owen Marsh scored one of the Wildcats' two goals Thursday in a win at Bonner Springs.***

BONNER SPRINGS – The last time Louisburg and Bonner Springs faced off on the pitch in 2023, Bonner Springs stole a victory away from the Wildcats in overtime.

Louisburg wasn't going to let that happen this time around.

The Wildcats scored two second half goals and earned a 2-1 victory over the Braves in their Frontier League opener at Bonner Springs High School.

“Kicking off our league play with a win is a pretty nice feeling, especially since we’ve been struggling the last few years,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Frontier League soccer is pretty tough though. We took Bonner into overtime last year and ended up losing on an own goal, so this was a game that the guys really wanted to win.”

It also marked the fourth consecutive victory for the Wildcats to start the season as they have already equaled last year’s win total.

Louisburg has already shown they are an improved team after a rough 2023 season and it’s is something they hope to continue moving forward.

“There’s always the danger in getting overconfident, but we’re playing with a confidence that was missing last year,” Bovaird said. “It was a tough season, and definitely an anomaly for Louisburg soccer. There were a handful of games that we lost by one goal last season – games that I felt we could have won.

“This year, we’re in the position to come out on top with those close games, which the guys have shown in our first four games. It’s a confidence that comes from experience, maturity, and a desire to prove themselves to the rest of the state.”

It was an evenly-played match throughout and Bonner Springs outshot the Wildcats 13-10, but it remained scoreless after one half of action.

That changed midway through the second half as senior Colton Blue gave the Wildcats the lead with a goal on an assist from Emmett White. Blue finished the night with three shots on target.

Louisburg added on another goal a few minutes later as junior Owen Marsh scored on an assist from Caleb Feldkamp to put the Wildcats up, 2-0. Feldkamp, Grant Cannon and White also had a

shot on target.

Bonner Springs added a goal in the final few minutes, but the Wildcats were able to hang on and stay perfect on the season.

“Coach (Nick) White and I gave a pretty sincere talk to them at halftime,” Bovaird said. “Basically, we stressed that they looked like they were flat on their feet, playing tense, and out of their comfort zones. We reminded them of back in the day when we played soccer and had fun with it. That was the challenge we gave them – get back in that mindset and play for the fun of it, play relaxed, and play smart.

“I gave them a challenge before the game – have our time of possession above 30 minutes, get at least 8 strings of six or more passes, post a defensive shut-out, and have the majority of our attacks from from what we’ve been drilling all last week. First half, it wasn’t looking too likely that we’d hit those goals. With the second half, though, we came pretty close. We got the pass strings and nearly had the time of possession. Although we gave up a goal, we did very well with our attacks.”

The Wildcat defense held firm for much of the match as junior goalie Evan Moreland had four saves on the night and almost had the clean sheet.

Louisburg will try and make it five straight this Tuesday when it hosts Lansing. The match is set to begin at 6 p.m.

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## **Brown’s golden goal lifts**



# Wildcats past Pittsburg in OT



***Louisburg senior Jacob Brown holds off a defender during a game earlier this season. Brown scored the game-winning goal in the second overtime on Tuesday against Pittsburg.***

PITTSBURG – Louisburg was less than 30 seconds away from not only leaving Pittsburg with a tie, but watching a two-goal lead disappear.

It wouldn't have been a loss, but the Wildcat players would have lamented about this game slipping through their fingers.

Luckily, they didn't have to do any of that.

With 28 seconds remaining, senior Colton Blue sent a corner into the box and senior Jacob Brown scored the golden goal to give the Wildcats a 3-2 overtime win – their second overtime

victory in three games to start the season.

Not only that, but it was Louisburg's third consecutive win to start the year after winning just four games in 2023.

"Pittsburg came back with a frenzy," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Having a 2-0 lead in soccer is the worst type of lead to have. You think you're good, but all it takes is one goal to get the other team back in it. The Pittsburg players had been cramping, arguing with each other, and breaking down as a team, but once they got their first goal, it was a flurry of attacks.

"They got closer and closer until they finally put in the tying goal. This win was absolutely gutsy. I told the Pittsburg coach after the game how impressed I was with his team's rally – the energy, the intensity, and the team unity that all the sudden came together. I'm pretty proud of the gutsy performance we showed."

Louisburg took the lead in the first half as sophomore Brody Bovaird scored his first goal of the season. Wildcat goalie Evan Moreland punted the ball over the top of the Pittsburg defense and Bovaird was able to chase the ball down to put the Wildcats up 1-0.

The Wildcats (3-0) doubled their lead in the second half as Emmett White scored on an assist from Will Showalter.

"We are getting more and more scoring opportunities," coach Bovaird said. "The score of our first three games doesn't really represent our growth offensively and the threats we've been giving our opponents. I felt pretty good to see us get the lead in the first half and then to have a second goal give us a little bit of a buffer."

However, Pittsburg would mount a comeback of its own. The Purple Dragons cut the Louisburg lead in half, and then with 24 seconds left in regulation, the Wildcats were called for a

handball in the box and Pittsburg was awarded a penalty kick.

Moreland made the initial save on the penalty, but Pittsburg scored off a rebound to force overtime.

After a scoreless first extra period, Brown gave the Wildcats the victory with time running out in the match.

“Before the game, I told the guys that we need to keep our mindsets focused – believe, compete, and do one more, or ‘Wildcat Style’ as I like to call it,” coach Bovaird said. “I told them that we needed to get out there and fight the good fight the entire game, that we needed to finish the game the right way by giving our best efforts and intensity.

“Finally, I told them that they needed to keep the faith and believe in the process. A win like what we had over Pittsburg is a huge character-statement for these guys, and I sure hope they realize how far they’ve come.”

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## **Wildcats outlast Independence in home opener to win second straight**





***Louisburg's Mika McKittrick (24) and Owen Marsh (9) celebrate with Colton Blue following his goal right before halftime Thursday against Independence.***

It may just be two games into the season, but this is exactly the start the Louisburg boys soccer team was hoping to see.

On Thursday in its home opener, Louisburg held off Independence for a 2-1 victory, which was its second straight win to start the season. The Wildcats, who won just four matches a year ago, are primed for a big rebound.

"The guys are feeling pretty good, coming off our opening week with two hard-fought wins," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "In both games, we were ahead of our opponents in nearly every category – we outscored them, out-possessed them, out-shot them and out-passed them. Last year, and the year before, we had several games where we did some of those things but still couldn't pull out the victory. To start off the year

with doing so many things right on the field and being able to walk away with the win, that means something for the guys. They're figuring out quite a bit, and it's exciting."

The Wildcats (2-0) got out to a quick start and took an early lead on Independence. In the opening minutes, senior Emmett White took advantage of a misplayed ball by the Bulldogs in the box and shot it past the goalie for a 1-0 advantage.

Independence got a goal of their own midway through the first half to tie it up, but the Wildcats responded with seconds left in the first half.

Senior Colton Blue hit a shot from the right side from 20 yards out that curved into the corner of the net to give the Wildcats the lead and the momentum at halftime. Fellow senior Will Showalter earned the assist on the play.

"That goal was a huge rallying point for us," Bovaird said. "Getting a goal with under a minute left in the half gave us an incredible surge of confidence, and I'm sure it deflated the Independence kids a little. I'm not sure what was being said by their coach during halftime, but I know that Coach (Nick) White and I, along with our captains, were encouraged and positive with our halftime talk.

"We kicked off the second half with some dominating possession and consequent attacks. I'm really surprised we weren't able to get a bunch more goals. It was just one of those nights, though. We had many great chances."





***Louisburg junior Caleb Feldkamp possesses the ball and looks for an open teammate Thursday at home.***

Louisburg kept the Independence defense busy as it tallied 10 shots on goal and 26 shots on the night. Blue led the way with four shots on target, while Caleb Feldkamp and White each had two.

Independence finished the night with 14 shots, but the Wildcats controlled possession for much of the match.

"We figured out pretty quickly that their go-to play was to kick the ball long and chase it down," Bovaird said. "There were some hiccups during the first half where we stopped playing our game and got into the habit of dribbling too much, but at halftime we talked to the team about what we needed to change.

"Our style is possession, passing, and moving to space. We let

the ball do the work and we force the other team to run like crazy. Last night we had a 75 percent pass success rate, we had 32 total pass strings, and we had 10 strings of 6 or more passes. Once we slowed things down and kept control of the ball, it was much easier to limit them.”

The Wildcat back line of Ethan Sharp, Dan Minster, Mika McKitrick and Cole Clover also did their job limiting the Bulldogs’ opportunities, along with subs Ryan Barbarich and Renner Erickson.



***Louisburg senior defender Dan Minster clears the ball away from two Independence players Thursday during the Wildcats’ home opener.***

Louisburg goalie Evan Moreland also recorded three saves on the night.

“Each game so far, our back line has been learning and growing

together,” Bovaird said. “The starting four are all seniors – Ethan, Cole, and Dan are big and strong guys and Mika has got the wrestler’s mentality. Our defensive subs – Ryan Barberich and Renner Erickson – are both very smart players with great knowledge of the game. Those guys were doing great holding their line, communicating, and balancing out our defense.

“Evan Moreland has shown a lot of growth from last year as well. The more we play, the more they’re going to figure out, and we’re going to be limiting quite a few of our opponents’ attacks.”

Louisburg will try for its third straight win Tuesday when the Wildcats travel to Pittsburg. The match is set to begin at 6 p.m.

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## **Wildcats rally past Basehor-Linwood in overtime to win season opener**



It could have easily went the other way for the Louisburg boys soccer team.

After giving up a goal in the opening minutes of Tuesday's season opening match at Basehor-Linwood, the Wildcats could have looked back at their 4-win season a year ago and all those close games that didn't go their way.

Doubts could have crept in the minds of the Wildcat players – but they didn't let it happen.



Instead, the Wildcats persevered, and after they recorded the game-tying goal in the second half, senior Emmett White scored the golden goal in overtime to give Louisburg a 2-1 victory to begin its season with a positive result.

"If you rewind to our first overtime game of last year's season, we were tied up with Bonner Springs and playing great, but then things went south when they scored off an own goal in overtime," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Now with this season, the guys kept their fire going, even when things weren't really going our way. They were disciplined and they believed in the process. Winning like that in overtime really helped reinforce so much of what coach (Nick) White and I are trying to instill in the team."

Louisburg (1-0) found itself down in the game's opening minutes, and had their opportunities to tie it later in the first half and early in the second half, but couldn't get the opportunities to go.

The Wildcats finally broke through the Basehor defense as junior Owen Marsh played a through ball that found the foot of Colton Blue and the Louisburg senior found the back of the net midway through the second half.

"We started off a little flat, and they got an early goal on us," Bovaird said. "That definitely wasn't how we wanted to begin the game. We had so much possession, and by watching the game you can tell it's a much improved team from last year. Their goal came off a little lapse with our back line, but they shaped up and held their own the rest of the game.

"Basehor didn't really make many threats after that goal. We evened things up in the second half when Owen sent a through-ball past the defense for Colton. Colton's timing was perfect, he stayed onside until the ball went through, and he went to goal with precision and composure."

The match eventually went to overtime, and toward the end of

the 10 extra minutes, the Wildcats got their second goal.

Ryan Barberich sent a long pass into the middle box, which found the chest of White, who settled the ball and put it past the Basehor keeper for the game-winner.

It is that perseverance that Bovaird hopes will propel his team to several more wins this season.

"We're trying some new things with our formation, which allowed for a few hiccups, but it's a process of learning, Bovaird said. "The guys are savvy enough soccer players that they're figuring things out pretty quickly. We didn't have one of our seniors due to illness, but with a little adjustment of sliding Owen Marsh back to center mid and putting Brody Bovaird up top in his place, we overcame that obstacle. Our starters did a phenomenal job, and our subs stepped right in and played their part.

"Sure, going down 1-0 within the first few minutes of the game isn't ideal, missing out on getting calls to go our way is frustrating, and being unable to capitalize on some good scoring opportunities runs the risk of breaking down with our style. But the thing is that these guys kept their faith, they refused to let frustration set in, and they were resilient through it all. That's an outstanding preview of what we hope to be a great season."

Louisburg will try for two straight wins Thursday as the Wildcats host Independence for a 6 p.m. start at the Wildcat Soccer Stadium.

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# Eight seniors ready to lead Louisburg soccer after tough 2023



*Louisburg senior Emmett White celebrates a goal during a match last season. White is one of three returning all-league players for the Wildcats.*

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The Wildcats posted just four wins in 2023 as they featured a roster with only one senior at the time. It was a young, and inexperienced group.

Fast forward to the present and this year's version of the Wildcats have a little different look to them. While many of the names are the same as they return almost everyone from last year's roster, the players are now a year older with more varsity experience.

It is something head coach Bobby Bovaird hopes pays off in a big way for the 2024 season.

"These guys have the advantage of being able to use last year as a trial run for this year," Bovaird said. "Lots of lessons learned from the 2023 season, and I'm so excited to see how much they've all grown. They're stronger and faster, and they've grown considerably with their soccer IQ.

"It's been a great start to the season. We've got 41 boys out for soccer this year, and eight of them are seniors. All summer long we've had incredible participation with practices, the Ottawa Summer 7v7 League and conditioning."

Louisburg has built a strong foundation to work with and it starts with its eight seniors – three of which are returning All-Frontier League players.

Senior Emmett White is the Wildcats' top returning player from a season ago. White earned second-team all-league honors and had eight goals and two assists last season.



White was a big focus of several opposing teams last season and will more than likely be the same this year.



***Louisburg senior Cole Clover is one of eight returning seniors for the Wildcat boys socce team.***

He is just one of several important pieces in the midfield

that includes seniors Colton Blue and Will Showalter, who each earned all-league honors last season. Senior Jacob Brown also returns to join Showalter at the defensive-mid spot.

“We’ll have a string of experienced seniors in the middle of the field – Emmett as our striker, Colton as our center attacking mid, Will Showalter and Jacob Brown as our center defensive mids, and Ethan Sharp and Cole Clover as our center backs,” Bovaird said. “They’re all poised to have great seasons. We’ll have a lot of talent on the outside, and with that strong core in the middle being able to dish the ball out wide, we are looking to get a lot of goals this year.”

The Wildcats will also have few returning options at forward to help those potential goals. Sophomore Owen Marsh and junior Caleb Feldkamp return after seeing several varsity minutes last season, as did Brody Bovaird. Grant Cannon and Cody Courtney will also see time up top as well.

“We’ve been making huge gains with playing a possession style of soccer,” coach Bovaird said. “One of my goals for the summer was to help the team improve on consistently stringing together passes, and it’s been great to see their progress. We’ll be possessing the ball and moving it up the field with solid passes and movement to space, and I think that will be the key. It’s an old soccer cliché – let the ball do the work.”

Defensively, Sharp and Cole Clover will join outside backs Dan Minster and Mika McKitrick to form the Wildcat back line, as will Ryan Barberich and Renner Erickson.

Junior Evan Moreland returns as the team’s starting goalie and Bovaird believes he is ready to take the next step.

“From the start of last year to the end, Evan made so many huge strides,” Bovaird said. “He went from playing a half as goalkeeper on JV as a freshman, to being the starting keeper on varsity as a sophomore. Talk about a trial by fire. This

season, though, he's going to be ready for a great experience."

There will also be a new voice on the sideline with Bovaird as Nick White was hired as the team's assistant coach and Bovaird is excited to see what is in store for his team's this season.

"Last year was a total anomaly," Bovaird said. "It's such a rare thing for a high school team to have such a lack of seniors, and I don't see that situation happening again in the near future. Our seniors are taking on outstanding leadership roles, the underclassmen are buying into the system and coach White and I are totally in tune with the goals of the season and how we're going to get there.

"Our season motto for this year is simple: 'Believe.' We're looking to get back to the top of the league, and we're looking to bring home a state trophy, and Coach White and I fully believe that the guys can do just that this year."

Louisburg begins its season Tuesday when the Wildcats travel to Basehor-Linwood for a 6 p.m., match. Louisburg has its home opener Thursday against Independence.

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## **Wildcat soccer earns five spots on All-Frontier League team**



***Louisburg junior Emmett White earned second team honors for the Wildcats after he led the team with eight goals on the season.***

Louisburg might not have had the season it wanted record-wise, but that didn't mean the Wildcats didn't have success.

Individually, several Wildcats had strong seasons and it showed when the All-Frontier League soccer team was released.

Louisburg, which finished with a 4-13 record on the year, had five selections to the all-league squad, including a second team honor in junior Emmett White.

"Just like any other year, our league was pretty tough," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Small schools around the KC or Wichita metro areas are bound to be tough and attract talent. Once again, our league had a representative in the state quarterfinals with Baldwin, and two other teams were regional finalists (Eudora and Tonganoxie). I wish we'd been able to get more of our guys represented on the all-league team, but we did have a lot of talent in the league. Half of the first and second team members are seniors, so there's room for our guys to move up next year."

White led the Wildcats all season from the forward and midfield spots. He led Louisburg in scoring with eight goals,



including three game-winners, and also finished with two assists.

He drew a lot of attention from the opposing defenses all season, but White still made a big jump from his sophomore to junior year.

“One thing that’s difficult for people outside the program to see is how much our guys have grown over this season,” Bovaird said. “We didn’t quite have the stats to back things up, but offensively and defensively, we made huge strides forward. Emmett was one player who showed the most growth. He’s been a starter since his freshman year, but he hadn’t gotten many goals until this year. He was also such a big motivational presence on the team as well. A silent leader whose work ethic was very inspirational.”



The Wildcats also had four honorable mention selections. Junior midfielder Colton Blue, junior defender Will Showalter, junior forward Jose Cuevas and senior forward John Powls.

Blue, who was a starter all season and a team captain, provided a steady influence in the midfield and finished the season with two goals and two assists. He also led the

Wildcats with 17 shots on goal.

"Most of our successful offensive attacks began in the middle with Colton," Bovaird said. "He's also been the epitome of hard work. He had zero absences from practice, and battled through a nagging injury all season. His work ethic in the weight room in the off-season shows how hard work pays off. He showed true grit throughout the season, whether it was practice or games, and his teammates were rallied behind his example."

Showalter was another team captain for the Wildcats and one of the leaders on the back line. He earned all-league honors as one of the team's top defenders.

"Despite his size, Will proved that he can hang with the best players out there," Bovaird said. "He combined his soccer talent with his smarts and his wrestling toughness to become an outstanding stopper for us. He rarely came off the field this season because of that."

Powls' season was cut short early in the year due to a knee injury, but the Louisburg forward was still recognized on the all-league list as he finished with a pair of goals.

"I'm very thankful for the league coaches selecting John to get honorable mention," Bovaird said. "His senior season was shortened unfortunately, but he scored our first goal of the season against Leavenworth and also put us ahead of Bonner Springs in his final game before hurting his knee. He'd made huge strides despite also missing his freshman and junior seasons due to injuries."

Cuevas filled in for Powls in the starting lineup after that and made an impact for the Wildcats. The Louisburg junior had four goals, including 11 shots on target.

"While Jose could always be depended upon to give 100 percent, he had a huge impact on the team with his overall positivity,"

Bovaird said. “Nearly every game, he was the one lifting up his teammates, encouraging them, and cheering them on.”

## **ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE SOCCER**

### **FIRST TEAM**

Cooper Carr, Baldwin, sophomore

Jake Rainforth, Spring Hill, junior

Josue Navarro, Ottawa, senior

Derek Lehmann, Eudora, senior

Timmy Shockey, Bonner Springs, senior

Zach Brueckner, Spring Hill, senior

Kaden Kerr, Eudora, senior

Dylan Kuntz, Baldwin, junior

Josh Audiss, Ottawa, junior

Andrea Columbano, Tonganoxie, senior

GOALIE: Angelo Giron, Bonner Springs, senior

### **SECOND TEAM**

Emmett White, Louisburg, junior

Dylan Patterson, Baldwin, senior

Gavin Shupe, Tonganoxie, senior

Christian Koehn, Eudora, senior

Seth Oberkrom, Spring Hill, junior

Owen Andrewjeski, Bonner Springs, senior

Lachlan McRae, Tonganoxie, sophomore

Ethan Smasal, Baldwin, sophomore

Gabe Luna, Bonner Springs, sophomore

Aidan O'Dell, Spring Hill, freshman

GOALIE: Nate Steinlage, Eudora, junior

### **HONORABLE MENTION**

Nicholas Johnson, Baldwin, junior

Tito Biles, Baldwin, junior

Ayden Ramirez, Eudora, senior

Leo Schoenberger, Baldwin, sophomore

Jason Jones, Bonner Springs, sophomore

Caleb Hepner, Ottawa, junior

Ian Rimmer, Baldwin, senior

Conner Barnum, Paola, senior

Jose Cuevas, Louisburg, junior

Jack Reed, Bonner Springs, senior

Kenny Grimm, Bonner Springs, senior

Colton Blue, Louisburg, junior

Carter Hepner, Ottawa, junior

Sawyer Holdsworth, Paola, sophomore

Emery Weiser, Tonganoxie, junior

Parker Simon, Spring Hill, junior



Oscar Pinela, Bonner Springs, freshman

Aiden Jameson, Baldwin, senior

Brayden Hayes, Eudora, junior

Will Showalter, Louisburg, junior

Seth Lovitt, Spring Hill, junior

John Powls, Louisburg, senior

Joe Ziembicki, Baldwin, senior

Sergio Medrano, Eudora, senior

Daniel Peterson, Eudora, junior

GOALIES: Jackson McWilliams, Tonganoxie, senior; Gus Boyle, Baldwin, junior

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## **Wildcat season comes to a close with regional loss to Bishop Miege**



ROELAND PARK – The Louisburg boys soccer had the unenviable task of squaring off with the defending state champion, Bishop Miege, in the first round of the Class 4-1A regional tournament.

The difficultly level went up a couple notches as the two teams played the entire 80 minutes in a downpour Tuesday at Bishop Miege.

The Wildcat hopes of an upset was washed away early as the Stags poured on the goals en route to a 10-0 loss for Louisburg. Miege went on to win the regional title over Eudora on Thursday.

“The conditions were absolutely miserable, but we were in the same boat as the majority of the teams in the state,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Some teams played Monday night, but I’m glad we had the chance to get one more practice under our belts before we took on Miege. Tuesday’s weather definitely changed the way we played. We were soaking wet and our cleats were heavier than usual. The ball wasn’t moving the same, and with the wind sending the rain down in diagonal sheets, it made it tough to see the full field.

“We’ve been very fortunate this season with weather, and we just weren’t prepared for how Tuesday’s conditions would

impact the game. Taking on the 7-time state champs was also a tough reality. For the third time in four years, we saw our season hopes dashed by Miego. That doesn't make it any easier. They were bigger, faster, and more experienced. No one wants to see their season ends to a team like Miego in conditions like what we had Tuesday night. It's got to be something we learn from, though. The guys have to remember how that game felt and use it as motivation in the off-season."

Both teams had trouble finding their footing in the first half, but the Stags still took a 3-0 lead at halftime.

Miego opened up the scoring in the second half with seven goals and Louisburg ended its season with a 4-13 record.

Although the record wasn't what the Wildcats were hoping for, Bovaird saw a lot of progress from a team that featured just three returning varsity players from the year before.

"The team we finished with in October was much different from the team we started with in August," he said. "Everyone made so many huge strides. The reality of things is that we began the season with two returning starters (Emmett White and Colton Blue) and one player with significant varsity time last year (Jacob Brown). A few others received some playing time in 2022, but not much. Essentially, our team this year was a group of kids with junior varsity experience. We were underdogs from the start, but we managed to do some outstanding things along the way. Our first game of the season saw a heroic comeback for a 3-2 victory. We held off Spring Hill to win 1-0 at home. We dominated our opponent at home for the Cancer Awareness Game. Several other games were winnable for us – Independence (2-1), Pittsburg (2-0), Bonner Springs (2-1 in OT), Eudora (1-0), Ottawa (2-4), and Tonganoxie (1-0) were all games that could have gone either way, in my opinion.

"We had three freshmen with considerable varsity time, as well

as a very solid bunch of sophomores. In goal, Evan Moreland went from a first-year player who split time on JV to having over 130 saves his sophomore year. Next year, we don't have to reload and replace a bunch of graduating seniors. We have the chance to reflect on our season and make improvements for next year. We've had some special teams over the years, but something about this group gives me the feeling that the 2024 season will be just as special as any other."

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## Wildcats fall to Piper on Senior Night in regular season finale



***Louisburg junior Ethan Sharp heads the ball away Tuesday during the Wildcats' home contest against Piper.***

It wasn't the Senior Night the Louisburg boys soccer team was hoping for Tuesday.

In what was the Wildcats' final game of the regular season,

they were tasked with going up against a talented side in Piper – a Class 5A program.

Louisburg lost the regular season finale, 5-1, to the Pirates but the Wildcats showed a lot of fight as they fell to 4-12 on the season.

“I think we definitely kept a competitive mindset going into the game,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Piper had a lot of speed, height, and experience on us. Everyone but their goalie and one of their subs was a senior. Our guys showed some grit, though. They didn’t back down from Piper’s physical style of play, and I’m pretty proud of how they didn’t let themselves get bullied.”

The Wildcats did get a chance to celebrate their senior class as they honored their lone player – John Powls – and two managers Lexi Hampton and Ava Halbert.



***Louisburg seniors (from left) Ava Halbert, John Powls and Lexi***



### ***Hampton were honored Tuesday on Senior Night.***

Powls suffered a season-ending knee injury early in the year, but got a chance to suit up and start. He was introduced with his teammates before being subbed out shortly after the start of the match.

“John has had such a rough go with injuries during his high school career,” Bovaird said. “His sophomore year was really the only season he played a full season. This year started off so well for him, being a starter up top and scoring two goals in our first four games. He would have been making a big difference for us throughout the season, so I’m really glad that he got the chance to suit up and be a part of the opening kickoff Thursday night.”

Piper jumped out to an early 2-0 advantage, but the Wildcats were able to cut into the Pirate lead as junior Emmett White dribbled into the box in the 27th minute. White’s shot hit off a Piper goalie, but he was able to get the rebound and took advantage of the empty net for the goal.



***Louisburg junior Jacob Brown clears the ball out of the Piper end of the field Tuesday at home.***

The Pirates added another score to take a 3-1 lead at halftime. Piper had two more second half goals to seal the win over the Wildcats.

Now, Louisburg will focus on the postseason as it begins the Class 4-1A regional tournament next week. Tournament brackets will be announced Saturday.

“The thing is, we just need to keep the right mindset as a team,” Bovaird said. “We can step out there and play against anyone, whether they’re 4A or 6A, on turf or on grass. It’s been a season full of progress and growth. From game 1 to our final game against Piper, it’s a much different and improved team. They’re excited to see what we’re capable of doing, and that’s all I can ask of the team.”

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# Wildcats get back on winning track in shutout of Paola



***Sophomore Owen Marsh dribbles past the Paola defense Tuesday during the Wildcats' 5-0 victory over the Panthers.***

After being on the wrong end of a pair of close matches, the Louisburg boys soccer team wanted to get back in the win column.

The Wildcats did that and then some Tuesday when they hosted rival Paola in a Frontier League match. Louisburg scored four second half goals and came away with a 5-0 victory over the Panthers.

Louisburg improved its record to 4-10 as the Wildcats got a big boost of confidence as the regular season inches toward a close.

"We've been itching to get back into the win column since we lost to Ottawa and then Tonganoxie," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "It's been rough this season taking so many



losses, but when you look at it, there were many winnable games that could have gone our way if a few things had gone differently. We just needed to get that confidence boost, and doing so against our rival Paola was a nice touch.

“Against Paola, we were able to get off more shots and crosses than we’d done in any other game this season. That’s one thing we really needed – to be able to have those offensive attacks in a live game situation. Doing them at practice in scrimmages is one thing, but getting the experience against an opponent is where we really get to figure things out.”



***Jose Cuevas scored two goals to lead the Wildcats Tuesday against Paola.***

The Wildcats dominated possession from the opening whistle and had plenty of opportunities to score early. Louisburg only found the back of the net one time in the first half on a goal

from Jose Cuevas on an assist from Emmett White.

Louisburg picked up the scoring in the second half as White added two goals, including one that was assisted by Cuevas. Freshman Brody Bovaird scored his first varsity goal, while Cuevas also added another to give himself two scores in the contest.

On the night, the Wildcats took 41 shots and had 14 that were on target. White led the way with 12 shots, while Cuevas and Owen Marsh each had eight.

Marsh, White and Jacob Brown each had an assist for Louisburg.

"The first half, we had so many shots that were way off target and we weren't getting the ball out wide for outside attacks in the air," coach Bovaird said. "Second half was a different story. The guys played with more patience and more focus. We got off twice as many crosses and we had nine shots on target. It was definitely a matter of keeping the guys patient and focused.

"When players start to realize that their attacks aren't being very effective, they often start thinking too much about it and lose their focus. They start getting desperate and do things that go against their training, and then before you know it, the game looks more like herd-ball than soccer. I'm proud of how the guys stayed focused and disciplined. They did a much better job of playing up to our level Tuesday night."





***Dan Minster heads the ball away Tuesday against Paola.***

The Wildcats weren't tested much defensively and gave up just one shot on the night to the Panthers. Goalie Evan Moreland earned the clean sheet.

It was also a win off the field for Louisburg as it hosted its annual Cancer Awareness Game and raised more than \$1,500 for a local family battling cancer.

"The win against Paola was a pretty big moral victory," Bovaird said. "It was a game we were able to come out and get some goals, it was against our big rival, and it was on our Cancer Awareness night. The best thing about that game was seeing everyone supporting one another. So much positive energy on the field and on the bench."

Louisburg is back at it tonight as the Wildcats travel to Turner. Varsity is slated to begin at 6 p.m.

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# Wildcats record second straight shutout in win over Chanute



*Louisburg junior Colton Blue settles a pass during a match earlier this season. The Wildcats earned a 3-0 win Tuesday at Chanute.*

CHANUTE – The Louisburg boys soccer team snapped an eight-game losing skid last week, but on Tuesday at Chanute, the Wildcats got a chance to start a different kind of streak.

Louisburg earned – not only its second straight win – but back-to-back shutouts with a 3-0 victory on the road over Chanute.

After earning a big win over Spring Hill last week, Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird was happy to see his team build off it against the Blue Comets.

“That was the sort of win we needed,” Bovaird said. “Getting

two in a row is a huge confidence booster. They'd beaten Pittsburg, 2-1, a couple of weeks ago, so on paper, one might assume that they would be a superior team. The thing about our Pittsburg game is that we dominated the game, but they were able to score in the first minute of the game as well as the final minute. We had a ton of shots that we just couldn't land that game.

"This was our first road victory of the season, and it's tough to get a win away from home. There might be hostile crowds, officials who call the game different from what we're used to, and field conditions that aren't favorable. Regardless, we stepped up and played with a ton of heart. Before the game, I told the guys that they need to step on the field with confidence, passion, and enthusiasm, and that's what they did."

Louisburg junior Emmett White got the scoring started for the Wildcats midway through the first half. White received a pass from Jacob Brown and took the shot from about 25 yards out that curved over the goalkeeper's head for the opening goal.

The Wildcats (3-8) took a 2-0 lead late in the first half when freshman Brody Bovaird crossed the ball to Jose Cuevas in the box and the Louisburg junior put it away. It would be the first of two goals for Cuevas on the day.

Louisburg sealed the win early in the second half when White dribbled down the left side of the field and made the cross to Cuevas who found the back of the net.

"We were making great connections all night with our offense," coach Bovaird said. "All summer we talked about playing possession soccer, and when the time is right, the shots will be there. Games like the Chanute one give the guys affirmation that we're working toward things the right way."

Wildcat goalie Evan Moreland earned his second straight clean sheet and got some help from his back line of Ethan Sharp,

Will Showalter, Dan Minster and Cole Clover.

“Our defense played a very solid game and showed a lot of guts,” coach Bovaird said. “For the second straight game, Evan had a clean sheet, and he’s really connecting very well with our center backs Ethan Sharp and Will Showalter. We got to a point where I started putting in our reserves, and a lot of younger guys got to see some playing time. The whole time they were on the field, the group held their own and contained the Chanute attacks. I’m very proud of what we saw from everyone that game.”

Louisburg will try for three straight victories today when it travels to Ottawa. Varsity is slated to begin at 6 p.m.