

# Numbers are up for LHS fall sports



After making the playoffs a season ago, the Louisburg High School football watched its number rise by a small number as they try to improve off of its 7-3 season in 2015. The Wildcats hold a scrimmage at 8 a.m., on Saturday.

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A week into the fall sports season, all of the Louisburg High School sports teams have seen their participation numbers rise from last year – albeit by a small number.

It would make sense as all four programs made strides in the 2015-16 campaign. The football team returned to the playoffs after a 3-win season the year before and volleyball placed third at the state tournament.

Boys soccer won its first regional title in five years despite a rough beginning. Meanwhile, cross country qualified a runner for the state meet for the first time in several years and the girls team made program history when it won its first ever meet.

Needless to say, last year's results have left several excited for what is to come in all sports.



**Sophie McMullen is one of three returning varsity players from last season's third place finish at state for the LHS volleyball team.**

Louisburg's football team won seven games last season, which was four more than the year before despite a first-round exit in the playoffs. The Wildcats saw their numbers rise from 58 to 63 this season and are ready to make an improvement on the field as well.

They are going through 2-a-days now and will finish a grueling week with an 8 a.m. scrimmage Saturday.

"The first couple days have gone real well, however we are a little limited in what we can do and expect without full pads," football coach Kyle Littrell said. "We have a great group of kids who have committed themselves to our grueling summer program and the seniors have really taken the leadership role and ran with it."

Volleyball spent the first three days of practice going through tryouts, but head coach Jessica Compliment saw numbers rise from 28 to 36 this season, which means a few more cuts

than last year, but Louisburg has to replace five varsity players from a year ago.

The Lady Cats might have the shortest amount of time to get ready of all the sports as they open their season with the preseason Frontier League tournament on Aug. 27 in Baldwin.

“The first few days of practice have centered around testing and conditioning,” Compliment said. “We started practice with the team on Thursday. I know the players are ready to get the season going, which is good because we have a quick turnaround with a tournament in a week.”



**Louisburg's (from left) Jon Paul Totta, Kyle Allen and Jacob Arnett take part in a drill during a soccer practice Wednesday.**

First-year boys soccer coach Kyle Conley inherits a Wildcat program that won the regional tournament and advanced to the state quarterfinals. The numbers for the Wildcats program were up by just two from last year, but Conley has liked what he has seen out of his group thus far.

“The kids are focused and determined,” Conley said. “I am very pleased with their attitudes and work ethic. They seem eager to learn from each session. I love how the kids are believing

in the program and my philosophy.

“It is really good to finally get started and get things going. I am excited to see what this team will become. I do understand that our league is incredibly talented, but our mind set it going to be we have something to prove.”

As for cross country, head coach John Reece has seen a large number return for the season, especially on the girls. The Wildcats have 36 runners out this season – with 24 of those competing on the girls team. Louisburg had 31 total runners out a year ago.



**Louisburg cross country runners Kaitlyn Gaza (left) and Lilly Mick finish up a practice run Wednesday.**

Junior Wyatt Reece returns to help the boys after qualifying for the state meet as a sophomore.

“Practices have started great, especially since it is not 110 degrees in the shade,” coach Reece said. “Those who ran through the summer are ahead of the game. We hope to do some great things this year with almost all of my varsity girls returning.”

Look for full previews on each team next week at Louisburg

## Wildcat boys soccer improves over summer



Louisburg's Jacob Benne passes the ball off in a drill during the Wildcats' boys soccer team camp July 13. The Wildcats ended their week-long camp on July 15 and have been busy working since early June.

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The Louisburg High School boys soccer team certainly saved its best play for last a year ago when the Wildcats caught fire at the right time, won a regional title and earned a spot in the state quarterfinals.

Now the Wildcats hope to use that momentum to get off to a good start this season. The players have been busy all summer preparing for the start of their season in August and are getting used to their new coach – Kyle Conley.

Louisburg held its week-long team camp that ended on July 15 and have also had numerous workouts over the course of the summer that began in early June.

"I feel camp went really well and we started to build some

chemistry and develop a bit of standards that I want to achieve,” Conley said. “We had 25-27 guys out throughout the week, and the summer, for that matter. I was extremely pleased with their turnout and dedication to get better.”

The camp gave Conley a chance to work with his new team and was also an opportunity for the players to get used to his coaching style and what he expects.



**Head coach Kyle Conley looks on as his players go through a drill during the Wildcats' team camp earlier this month.**

“We stressed the importance of focus and training at game speed,” Conley said. “It is very easy to go through the motions and at a slow pace. Coach (Michael) Pickman and I stressed playing the game faster and practicing harder. I feel throughout the summer the boys started to buy into my philosophy.

“Also with that philosophy, I needed us to be better passers and value that possession. I felt in the past they made a lot of needless turnovers. We focused on finding feet and keeping the ball. To accomplish that we helped them read the game and anticipate what was going to happen and make the right decision to keep the ball.”

The Wildcats return senior midfielder Noah Juarez, who has been an all-Frontier League, and all-state player the last three seasons. Conley will also look to get some help from juniors Christian Scholtz and Grant Ryals on the offensive side along with several others.

Defensively, Louisburg lost several starters to graduation a year ago and is currently working to find different fits on that side of the ball.

Still, while both sides of the ball are important, Conley wanted to spend the summer and focus on the basics so the team is ready to transition into the first day of practice on Aug. 15.

"I want to play a fast and a possession style game," Conley said. "For that to happen we had to improve our overall fundamentals. I wanted to stress the improving our overall technique and accuracy. To accomplish that, I have a goal that each player will get 300 touches on the ball each practice. By the end of summer they understood what my expectations were and worked hard to achieve that standard. Each training session was a build-up that led to some sort of competition/game play."

Along with the team camp, the Wildcats held team workouts twice a week since the beginning of June and have also held weight sessions as well.

All that is to help the Wildcats persevere through a rugged 2016 schedule and get off to a good start to the season. For that to happen, Conley knows he will need his veterans to step up and lead the younger players.

"I am extremely pleased with the strides we have made this summer," Conley said. "I know we still have a lot of work to do, but I saw improvement and I feel with their work ethic we can improve so much more. I also truly appreciated the leadership that the upperclassmen have demonstrated. That's

going to be essential throughout our season.

“I know that we are not going to completely change overnight, but the best part of this summer we started to improve and they showed themselves that they can. I am excited to go compete and watch these young men compete. We will have our work cut out for us, but I feel these young men want to improve and get better which is half the battle.”

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## Conley takes over as LHS boys soccer head coach



Kyle Conley was recently named as the head coach for the Louisburg High School boys soccer team and takes over for longtime coach Ben York, who resigned his post last fall.

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Kyle Conley has spent the last several months focusing on molding and guiding the Louisburg High School girls soccer team through its first season.

It was a special run for the girls as they won a regional title and finished the year with 14 wins. Now, his focus has shifted a little bit to the school's other soccer squad.

Conley was recently hired to take over Louisburg's boys soccer



program following the resignation of former coach Ben York last fall. This is the first time the program has had a change at the head coaching spot as York was with the program since its inception – 13 years ago. Also like with the girls program, Michael Pickman will serve as the assistant coach.

“Taking over the boys team is going to be a lot of fun,” Conley said. “It is different than the girls team because coach York has established Louisburg boys soccer as a quality program. I am excited to see what they bring to the table and to get us started. We will have a lot of the same principals as the girls.”

The Wildcat boys are coming off a successful run in the postseason as well. Louisburg won the program’s sixth regional title and won three of the last four matches to finish the year with a 7-11-2 record.

The bad news is the Wildcats lost six seniors, including several on the defensive end, which is one of the areas Conley would like to address over the summer along with competing in a tough Frontier League.

“My goal is for us to compete in each and every league game,” Conley said. “They went 1-9-2 last year in league if I am not mistaken. For us to reach the goals I have for this program, we need to have success in the Frontier League. I understand that is easier said than done, but we will put in the work and see were that get us.

“There are some really quality players returning and I am excited to start working with them. I am concerned with the amount of defensive players that graduated, but the junior varsity had a lot of success and it’s time those players step in for us. We need to have the mind set of the next guy up.”

Conley began working with his new team starting last week and they will meet twice a week for summer workouts. He will then conduct a week-long team camp starting July 11 and hopes to

use that time to implement the changes he wants to the program.

“We will focus on technical aspects of the game, but it will be way more intense than the ladies program,” Conley said. “I want the boys to play a possession style game, but much quicker than they have in the past. There are some players with a lot of skill and they need to be the catalyst of our team and how we play.”

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## **Paola AD proposes bill to help classification issue**



Last October, Paola activities director Jeff Hines went to a Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) regional meeting to get updates on classification issues.

Six months later, Hines found himself in Topeka, in front of the Kansas Senate Education Committee to talk about a bill that could change the way schools are classified.

On Thursday, Hines sat in front of the committee to discuss Senate Bill 464 – a bill that he proposed with guidance of Sen. Caryn Tyson.

Statute 72-130 establishes specific guidelines pertaining to the organizational structure and functions of KSHSAA. Senate Bill 464 would change one part of the statute and strike the line which allows schools to be classified only by student enrollment.

"The total number of students in schools is a great starting point for classifying them," Hines said. "It makes sense that the largest schools should play the largest schools and the smallest schools should play the smallest schools, but there are other things that need to be considered."

For several months, KSHSAA has had a classification committee discuss different ways to have a competitive balance with its member schools. They came up with ideas of reducing the number of classifications or changing the number of schools in a division.

"There were no other factors being considered and that bothered me," Hines said, "All that would do was reshuffle the schools just a little bit but we would have the same problem."

The problem for the committee was its hands were tied thanks to the wording in Statute 72-130 that specifically states schools can only be classified by enrollment numbers and nothing else.

So Hines went to work and helped create Senate Bill 464, which does not give a specific solution to the problem, but rather would take wording out of the statute to allow KSHSAA to figure out how to classify schools on its own.

Hines gave a 15 minute testimony in front of the committee and then answered questions from the committee members for more than 30 minutes afterward. Before the hearing, Hines received support from every member in the Frontier League, Pioneer League and all but two schools in the Kaw Valley League, as those two didn't respond before the hearing.

Following Hines' testimony, Sen. Vicki Schmidt, R-Topeka, had concerns as to why KSHSAA did not come in front of the committee itself to ask for changes.

Hines informed the committee that it would be redundant for KSHSAA to endorse the plan, because if approved, member schools would still have to vote on it. He believes Bill 464 would let KSHSAA come up with a system and let schools improve it, instead of the legislature.

"KSHSAA wants to be neutral because this proposal would affect different schools in different ways," Hines said. "It could be very beneficial to some schools and others may not like it because they might have to move up a class. So, why should KSHSAA have to pick sides in it and pit member against member? It doesn't have to be that way in my opinion.

"Yes, a school that has to move up a classification might not like it, but is it the best thing overall for the association? They can't look themselves in the mirror and say 'No, this isn't the right thing to do?'

A major problem for some member schools in KSHSAA is they do not believe it is competitively equal the way it is currently structured.

"I am not a believer in participation medals," Hines said. "If they are kindergartners, sure, but when you start playing, part of being successful later in life is learning how to compete. We all competed for a job when you have gone in for an interview and that is good. You need to have that skillset and I am not saying that we need to give more trophies out and give everyone a shot, but I just want a system in place that is equitable for all so that some don't have an unfair advantage at the expense of the rest and I think that is what is happening."

One of the problems is the lack of balance between championships won between public and private high schools.

Hines did research and presented numbers at the hearing at the number of state championships won between private and public schools from 2004 to 2014.

Here is what he found.

- Private schools make up slightly less than 8 percent of the KSHSAA membership.
- Private schools have won slightly less than 32 percent of the state championships.
- Based on membership percentage, private schools should only win approximately 8 percent of the titles, not nearly 32 percent.
- Private schools are winning four times more state titles than should be expected based on their memberships.
- Private schools are nine times more likely to win five or more state titles than their public school peers.

“In that period of time, I looked for who has won five or more state titles,” Hines said. “That is a difficult feat. You look at Paola’s history and we have won like seven and Louisburg has won three in 100-plus years. During those 10 years, 37 percent of those private schools won five or more during that time and public schools had 4 percent win five or more. Private schools are nine times more likely to become a dynasty or a successful program with strong tradition. You tell me how we are all the same?”

Another problem they are facing is schools with a high percentage of low socioeconomic status (SCS) students, cannot compete against fellow schools in their own classification in many activities, including football.

“There is a whole bunch of schools in the Kansas City, Kansas school district that are 6A or 5A that have no business competing against those really hard schools,” Hines said. “They don’t have resources, they don’t have the students, there is no interest and they have all those things working

against them and I feel bad for those kids. Who wants to trot out against some of those bigger schools and know you are going to get your ears boxed in? That is not fun. Moreover, it is not challenging for the kids those schools are playing against.”

Hines believes competition is important when it comes to the growth of the student athlete and it is beneficial for the school and its community.

“Not only what it does for grades, but for what it does for the human spirit,” Hines said.

“When I was the FFA advisor in Paola, we won 10 state championships in nine years and you could tell the interest by the students and the community went through the roof. You can say the same thing about Louisburg and what Jim Morgan does with his FFA kids. People flock to success.

“Naturally, when they are there they feel better about themselves, they want to work harder in the classroom to stay eligible and kids that want to stay involved are going to be more successful in life. It is all about having the chance to be successful.”

During Hines’ testimony in front of the Senate Education Committee, not all of the legislatures seemed open to the idea. Molly Baumgardner, R-Louisburg, asked Hines if he would be willing to relinquish state funding if the legislature agrees to release oversight of how KSHSAA classifies schools.

“If we relinquished the funding behind it, (high school activities) would disappear,” Hines said at the hearing.

No action was taken following the hearing, but the committee chairman spent 15 minutes with him and Tyson to help them strategize on what to do next.

One option is to amend the bill to include more specifics that could include a multiplier or a separate division for private

schools and a low SCS school de-multiplier.

Another option, Hines said, would be to have the classification committee draft a letter to the Senate Education Committee that states they would like to study these other factors as part of a proposal for revamping the classification system, but not until they feel the legislature is open to changing the law.

Whatever decision comes next, however, Hines wants it to be decided by multiple people within KSHSAA on how to proceed.

“I don’t feel comfortable making that change because I feel a committee needs to do the work,” Hines said. “I shouldn’t be doing it, nor should 11 legislators, you need more. We should let the classification committee work on it and hopefully we can get some things accomplished.

“The only way to allow this to happen is to remove the barrier in place that exists due to the state statute.”

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## Top 10 stories of 2015



Here are the Louisburg Sports Zone Top 10 Stories of the Year. In each brief explanation of the story, there will be a link to the full story of when the event actually happened. Thanks again for a successful 2015 and I am already looking forward to 2016.



**Hogan Welch (left) and Wyatt Reece each qualified for state in their respective sports.**

### **10. Welch and Reece qualify for state**

LHS students Hogan Welch and Wyatt Reece each put together strong seasons in their respective sports.

In May, Welch qualified for the Class 4A state golf tournament after he shot an 85 at the Osawatomie Golf Course to become one of five individual qualifiers for state. It was the first time Welch had qualified for the state tournament and would shoot a 79 a week later in McPherson to finish 40<sup>th</sup> overall.

As for Reece, he qualified for the state cross country meet for the first time in his career in October. The Louisburg sophomore came in 13<sup>th</sup> overall and was also one of five individual qualifiers. A week later Reece traveled to Wamego to compete at the state meet and ran a 18:43 to come in 71<sup>st</sup>.





**Louisburg's Jimmy Dolan (left) and Mya Diacono each suffered major head injuries from an accident just days apart. The Louisburg community rallied together to help the two families.**

### **9. Accidents bring Louisburg community together**

Jimmy Dolan and Mya Diacono live in the same community but were worlds apart from each other.

Jimmy, a junior at Louisburg High School, loves to wrestle, hang out with friends and live the life of a teenager.

It was a far cry from 9-year-old Mya who loves soccer, horses and spending time with her fourth-grade friends at Broadmoor Elementary. In a town of less than 5,000 people, the two had never met.

Two tragic accidents changed all of that.

On Jan. 12, Jimmy lost control of his vehicle while driving to school and suffered a major brain injury. Just 42 days later,

Mya was involved in an automobile accident just outside the Louisburg city limits that left her with the same severe brain trauma.

That was when the Louisburg community came together to help the two families cope with a burden no family should have to bear. Since then, both Jimmy and Mya are on the road to recovery thanks to the help of a lot of people.



**Louisburg Soccer Club president Karin Olson (second from left), Louisburg High School junior Maddie McDaniel (middle) and fundraising organizer DIana Moore (right) receive the WIN for KC Sprint Teamwork Award on Feb. 13 in Kansas City, Mo.**

#### **8. Girls soccer raises funds to start program, wins award**

A fundraising committee made a big push to make sure there was a girls soccer program at Louisburg High School.

The committee raised \$39,000 in almost a year's time to fund the program for three years. Thanks to all the hard work, the group was also recognized by the WIN for KC organization. The



Lady Cats' soccer season will kickoff in late March.



**Louisburg graduates Kody Cook (left) and Garrett Griffin are each winding down their careers with their respective Division I football programs.**

### **7. Griffin, Cook wrap up college careers**

Louisburg High School graduates Kody Cook and Garrett Griffin have lived the lives a lot of football fans could only hope for.

Both are wrapping up their Division I collegiate football careers and are doing it with a lot of success. Cook is living his dream with the Kansas State football team as he has made contributions at both the wide receiver and quarterback positions to help the Wildcats to the Liberty Bowl.

Griffin, on the other hand, battled through an injury-plagued senior season to help Air Force reach the Armed Forces Bowl and made several big plays at the tight end spot.



**Louisburg quarterback Austin Terry was one of several players responsible for the Wildcats' turnaround this season.**

### **6. Wildcat football has big turnaround**

After finishing with just three wins a year ago, the Louisburg High School football team put together a strong season in 2015 as they finished with seven wins.

Those seven victories put the Wildcats within a game of Paola for the Frontier League title and Louisburg also earned a spot in the regional playoffs before falling to Basehor-Linwood in a tight contest.





**The Louisburg High School soccer team captured its first regional crown since 2010 after a 2-0 win over Coffeyville.**

### **5. Louisburg soccer wins regional crown**

Through much of the regular season, the Louisburg High School soccer team didn't have much to cheer about.

The Wildcats had just four wins during the regular season, but they seemed to find the right chemistry in the postseason. Louisburg rattled off three consecutive wins in the postseason, including a 2-0 victory over Coffeyville-Field Kindley in the regional championship.

It was the Wildcats' first regional title since 2010 and their sixth in the last 10 years.



**Anders Vance won a regional title in the 285-pound weight class last February as he was one of five Wildcats to earn state bids.**

#### **4. Louisburg wrestling qualifies five for state**

The Louisburg wrestling team hadn't been a part of the state tournament since 2012 – that is before last season.

The Wildcats put together a breakout season as they qualified five for the state tournament, while Anders Vance won the regional crown at 285 pounds. Brenton Wrigley (195 pounds), Mason Koechner (220), Nathan Keegan (113) and Ryan Adams (138) all made the trip to Salina for the Class 4A state tourney.



**Jeff Lohse (left) and Ben York each stepped away from their head coaching posts in 2015.**

### **3. Long-time coaches resign from post**

Jeff Lohse and Ben York had been fixtures in their respective sports for Louisburg High School, but both decided to call it quits this year.

Lohse, who spent the last 17 years as the head coach for the LHS baseball team, stepped down from his spot in May, citing personal reasons. Lohse led the Wildcats to two state tournament appearances.

York, who was the head coach when the boys soccer program started, also cited personal reasons for leaving the Wildcat soccer program after 13 years. York helped the Wildcats to six regional titles in the last 10 years.





**Connor McMullen won the state title in the discus back in May and became Louisburg's first track state champion since 2011.**

## **2. McMullen wins state title in discus, Dennis medals in hurdles**

Louisburg High School senior Connor McMullen finally got the state title in the discus he had been searching for.

McMullen recorded a throw of 173 feet, 1 inch on his final attempt to win the Class 4A state discus title in Wichita back in May. He would also medal eighth in the javelin with a toss of 164-02.

Fellow senior Sean Dennis also garnered a state medal as he took fourth in the 110-meter hurdles. The boys and girls team combined sent a total of 11 athletes to the state meet.





**The Louisburg High School volleyball team finished third overall in 2015 after making it to state for the fifth time in the last six seasons.**

### **1. Lady Cat volleyball takes third at state**

The Louisburg High School volleyball team has made a habit of making the trip to Salina in recent years and this season was no exception.

This time, however, the Lady Cats finished with a victory.

After ending their season with a runner-up performance and two fourth-place finishes at state the last three years, Louisburg won its final match of the season in 2015 as it defeated Tonganoxie in the third-place match.

The Lady Cats qualified for the state tournament for the fifth time in the last six years.

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# Schneider, Juarez named to all-state team



Louisburg High School junior (left) Noah Juarez and senior Cale Schneider were recently selected to the Class 4-3-2-1A all-state second team by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association. Juarez was selected as a midfielder and Schneider as a defender.

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Two members of the Louisburg High School boys soccer team were recently selected among the top players in the state.

Senior Cale Schneider and junior Noah Juarez were recently selected to the Class 4-3-2-1A all-state second team by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association. This was the third time Juarez has been named to the all-state team and it was the first selection for Schneider.

“I am extremely happy and proud that two of our boys made second team all-state,” former Louisburg coach Ben York said. “For Cale this was his first year on the all-state team and a very well deserved one.

“For Noah, I was hoping that he would have been selected to

the first team and I definitely believe that he was right there with the caliber of athletes picked for first team. Nevertheless it's a great honor to make either team. Noah is an exceptional athlete and a top level soccer player in the state. I see great things in his future. I really enjoyed coaching both of them in my final year."

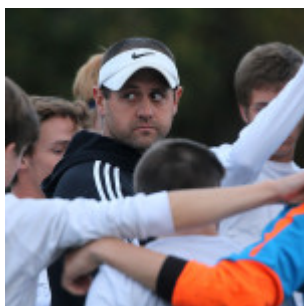
Schneider was recognized for his work on the defensive end, even though his season started out as a forward. He opened the year with a hat trick (three goals) against Fort Scott, but the team needed help more on the defensive side.

York moved him to the sweeper spot and he became a vital part of the defense for the remainder of the year.

As for Juarez, a midfielder, this was his second time he earned second team all-state honors and was an honorable mention selection his freshman year. Juarez finished with a team-high 11 goals to along with nine assists.

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## York steps down after 13 years



Louisburg High School boys soccer coach Ben York recently announced his resignation from the program after 13 years with the Wildcats. York has been the team's head coach since the program's inception in 2003.

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For 13 years, Ben York immersed himself into Louisburg High School boys soccer.

York was named the team's head coach when the program started in 2003 and every season since he could be found roaming the Wildcat sideline.

Next season, will be a different story.

York recently informed his team and the high school administration that he will not be returning for another season and is stepping down as the team's head coach. As much as he loved the program and his players, he had a bigger reason for saying goodbye.

"I probably have about five solid reasons I am doing it, but chief among all the reasons, and the only one that is important that anyone else knows is I have not gotten to the point in my life where my wife and kids have said, 'Hey, you have missed this or that,'" York said. "Realizing it now before it happens, knowing if I continue down this path, then it is eventually going to happen. I am choosing them in that scenario.

"If I blink it is going to be gone and I am never going to get that back. I can be the soccer coach the rest of my life after my kids are older. I was fortunate that I was given this opportunity so early. I was only three-and-a-half years older than the senior class in my first year of coaching. My wife has done a great job of taking care of everything while I was gone. Now I just want simple and I want time. I just need some time with family or just with me."

The Louisburg coach informed his team that he would be stepping down shortly before the playoffs began in late

October. It was a time York had dreaded for weeks.

As he wrestled with his decision, he watched his team struggle during the same time as they finished the regular season with just four wins.

“We were in a spot where we weren’t having a whole lot of success. I know it is there and I am trying to deal emotionally with not coaching anymore and when to tell my players and administration. When you come to the end as a coach, you are just overwhelmed with all the memories, whether it is happy or sad. It was hard to concentrate. After I told the kids, which was terrible, and I got past that day, it was a lot easier for me.”

The Wildcats seemed to turn the corner after that as they rattled off three straight victories in the playoffs to capture a regional title.

“I couldn’t have had a better end to the season,” York said. “Losing the last three or four games of the year would have been pretty bad, but we started playing better. Once I told them what was really happening, it seemed like the players’ attitudes changed and they were just like ‘Let’s go. Let’s see how far we can go.’ I think it was really neat to see and I think maybe they had a little more reason to be focused and they got after it.”

York put together a program that encountered a lot of success in his 13 years. During his tenure, the Wildcats won six Frontier League championships and six regional playoff titles.

In all, York put together a 131-80-12 record – but maybe more importantly – he had the opportunity to build Louisburg soccer from the ground up.

“It was the hardest thing I have done,” York said. “The hardest thing anyone can ever do is take something that doesn’t exist, and not just manage it, but I have a lifetime

full of memories.”

York, a Louisburg High School graduate himself, started those memories from day one when Chad Wagner scored the program’s first goal on a Saturday afternoon against Eudora. Or maybe it was when Zac Messmer’s free kick in overtime against Ottawa gave the Wildcats their first regional title.

He couldn’t forget the countless breakfasts at Miss B’s with long-time assistant Tony Juarez to talk about game plans. Even recently, York couldn’t help but smile when talking about the memories from this season’s group.

Whether it was welcoming former player Tanner O’Hara as an assistant coach or watching this year’s team rally to win the program’s sixth regional title after winning only four games during the regular season, they all hold a special place for him.

“I remember all the road trips,” York said. “I remember standing in the middle of the huddle every game and looking in their eyes knowing that they trust me. Then there are a billion more memories that are just for me.”

York hopes that the returning group of players can continue what he helped start and build on what is already a strong tradition.

“It is not going to end,” he said. “I told the guys that my part might be done, but it is not over. It is their responsibility now to carry things on and not let it fall apart. I can sit back and think of a billion things that bring a smile to my face about coaching here, but not a lot of things that make me sad. There have been some life changing things happen in this program and I was glad that I was here for those.

“I went to school here and to be able to give back was my primary goal. It wasn’t to win state or regional

championships, I just wanted to allow these kids a chance to play some good soccer and I think I succeeded in that. Maybe if there is a next time I will do even better, or I will try to anyway.”

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## Wildcat soccer puts three on all-league



Louisburg junior Noah Juarez earned a spot on the all-Frontier League boys soccer team for the third consecutive year as he was one of three Wildcats to earn spots on the all-league squad.

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The season may not have started out as well as the Louisburg High School boys soccer team had hoped, but it ended on a positive note with a regional championship.

Louisburg started playing better toward the end of the regular season and the Frontier League coaches took notice. The Wildcats, who finished with 7-11-2 overall record and a 1-9-2 mark in league play, garnered three spots on the all-league team that was recently released.



Junior midfielder Noah Juarez was the Wildcats' lone first-team selection. Senior defender Cale Schneider earned a second team honor and senior forward Parker Cates was named as an honorable mention.

De Soto led the league with seven spots on the team and Spring Hill was next with six selections. De Soto was second in the state this past season and Spring Hill came in fourth overall.

"I think we were well represented," Louisburg coach Ben York said. "Would I have liked to see a couple other of my players who I felt deserved a little more credit? Yes, but it was a great league this year. With Ottawa, Baldwin, De Soto and Spring Hill, that is 90 percent of everyone on the league team. They probably had a combined (49) wins.



**Senior Cale Schneider (right) was named to the all-league second team as a defender.**

"You are going to have that and we have had years like that ourselves where Louisburg has brought six or seven of the top nominations. It was a fun meeting to be at because I knew our team was good and the other coaches respected the progress we made."

Juarez is no stranger to the all-league list. The Wildcat



midfielder earned first team honors for the third straight season and was also a returning all-state player.

He finished with a team high 11 goals to go along with nine assists and was the focal point of the Louisburg offense.

“It has been fun watching him and it was good to see him mature as a leader in the second half of the season,” York said of Juarez. “He, Cale, Parker and the other seniors really took their roles seriously. He has a chance to be a first team all-state player this year and hopefully he can get that honor because he had a good year.”

Schneider was recognized for his work on the defensive end, even though his season started out as a forward. He opened the year with a hat trick (three goals) against Fort Scott, but the team needed help more on the defensive side.



**Senior Parker Cates finished out the season strong and was recognized for it as he was named as an honorable mention.**

York moved him to the sweeper spot and he became a vital part

of the defense for the remainder of the year.

"Cale was the main reason why we turned our season from one that was mediocre at best to a season where we did something good," York said "It was the type of year where if we didn't have a guy show up, we would just be OK. We were not a deep team and it showed how important Cale was to our team when he had to sit in the Spring Hill game because we got it handed to us.

"He is a good field player wherever you put him, but I think his niche was found this year as a sweeper. It worked really well for us and he is a great kid."

As for Cates, he saved his best performance for last. The Louisburg forward, who finished the year with seven goals, scored six of those in three of the last four games of the season.

"It is hard to tell someone like Parker that his goals are going to come for a long period of time," York said. "He knew they would come, he just wanted them to come before he graduated. His patience paid off, and once he put one in the back of the net, that confidence started breeding more confidence and he had a great last three or four games of the season. For him to overcome his struggles was great for the underclassmen to see because it shows them if you keep working at something that it will come."

## **ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE BOYS SOCCER**

### **FIRST TEAM**

Forward: Noah Lamar, De Soto, senior; Michael Werlein, Spring Hill, senior

Midfielder: Austin Culver, De Soto, senior; Noah Juarez, Louisburg, junior; Lucas Zoller, De Soto, senior; Lucas Moore,

Spring Hill, junior; Stefan Foulke, Ottawa, senior; Brendan Owings, Baldwin, senior; Andrew Dowdy, De Soto, junior

Defender: Kyle Moose, De Soto, senior

Goalkeeper: Patrick Conroy, Ottawa, senior

## **SECOND TEAM**

Forward: Carver Gerstberger, Spring Hill, senior

Midfielder: Keegan Finch, Ottawa, junior; Niklas Kramer, Paola, junior; Jacob Bailey, Baldwin, freshman; Justin Toumberlin, Eudora, senior

Defender: Jonny Wagner, Spring Hill, senior; Kyle Wokutch, Paola, senior; Logan Phillips, Baldwin, senior; Cale Schneider, Louisburg, senior; Keenan Powell, Spring Hill, senior

Goalkeeper: Bret Folks, Eudora, junior

## **HONORABLE MENTION**

Forward: Ethan Rodriguez, De Soto, sophomore; Noah Buckley, Baldwin, junior; Javon Williams, Ottawa, senior; Parker Cates, Louisburg, senior

Midfield: Sam Campbell, Eudora, junior; Joey Bernhardt, Eudora, senior

Defender: Travis Hodge, De Soto, senior; Byron Fangman, Ottawa, junior

Goalkeeper: Killian Beck, Spring Hill, junior

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# Wildcats fall to No. 1 ranked Rose Hill



Louisburg senior T.J. Svoboda battles a Fort Scott player for a 50-50 ball during the Wildcats first postseason game in Louisburg. The Wildcats traveled to Rose Hill for the state quarterfinals Tuesday, but saw their season come to an end in a 5-1 loss.

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ROSE HILL – The Louisburg boys soccer team knew it was heading into its most difficult situation of the season – on the road against the No. 1 team in the state with its season on the line.

No pressure, right?

The Wildcats didn't feel the pressure, in fact, they hung with defending state champion Rose Hill for much of the Class 4-3-2-1A state quarterfinal match Tuesday at Rose Hill High School. The match did get away from the Wildcats midway through the second half in their 5-1 loss, but coach Ben York saw some good things out of his team.

"Rose Hill was definitely as advertised," York said. "They are a great team and they won state last season for a reason. They probably have 10-11 seniors on their team this year and all of those guys were a part of their state championship last

season.

"I am just proud of the way our guys didn't back down and that we were able to put pressure on them and be physical. I think that caught them a little off-guard at first because I don't think they expected a team with a losing record to come at them like we did."

Louisburg didn't have a shot on goal in the first half, but it made it difficult on Rose Hill defensively as it gave up two goals that took unfortunate bounces for the Wildcats.

Rose Hill scored its first goal early in the first half on a misplay by the Wildcat defense and the Rockets scored their second goal on a free kick that deflected off of a player and in the net to take a 2-0 halftime lead.

"The guys were feeling pretty good at halftime and there a lot of positives coming from the huddle," York said. "We gave up two goals that we probably shouldn't have and those were the only two they scored so we were still in the game."

The Rockets took charge to start the second half and grabbed another goal to take a 3-0 lead, but the Wildcats didn't go away.

Junior Noah Juarez got the ball at the top of the box, dribbled past a Rose Hill defender and hit a shot past the goalie to give the Wildcats some life.

It didn't last long as Rose Hill answered with a goal in the next minute to all but seal the win and end the Wildcats' season.

"That goal took the wind out of our sails for sure," York said. "Noah just put in a great goal and we seemed to have some momentum and they came right back and scored. That is a tough thing to overcome at that point in the game.

"We left it all out on the field and our boys tried their best

and that is all a coach can ask for in these types of games. Other than maybe two positions, Rose Hill was more athletic and skilled than we were and that is tough to overcome sometimes.”

The Wildcats finished their season with a 7-11-2 record on the season that included three postseason victories and a regional championship. It also marked the final game for Louisburg seniors Cale Schneider, Jairus Brown, Hunter Mitchell, Parker Cates, Michael Minster and T.J. Svoboda.

“I am just so glad these boys got to experience a postseason run like we went on,” York said. “It had been awhile since we have gotten this far, but I always said that this team was better than our record showed. I didn’t care about wins and losses as much as playing well at the end of the season when it mattered most and I thought that we did that. This was a fun group to coach.”

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## **Louisburg soccer claims regional crown**



The Louisburg boys soccer team poses with its regional championship trophy following the Wildcats’ 2-0 victory over Coffeyville-Field Kindley on Thursday in Coffeyville. The Wildcats advance to the state quarterfinals where they will

**meet No. 1 Rose Hill on Tuesday in Rose Hill.**

**Photo courtesy of Christy Svoboda**

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COFFEYVILLE – The Louisburg boys soccer team didn't strike fear in any one team during the start of the Class 4-3-2-1A playoffs.

The Wildcats entered the playoffs with only four wins and didn't win a match in their last five opportunities. It isn't exactly a recipe for postseason success.

Despite that, the Wildcats can now call themselves regional champion.

For the first time since 2010, Louisburg won the regional championship game with a 2-0 victory over Coffeyville-Field Kindley on Thursday in Coffeyville and advanced to the state quarterfinals. The Wildcats also had victories against Fort Scott and Independence earlier in the week that helped them advance to the title match.

"To be honest I am not that surprised," Louisburg coach Ben York said. "Some people might be if they look at our record, but I know what our team is capable of. I am just so ecstatic for our guys because I know how hard they have worked to get to this point. We didn't have a great start to our season, and there were times where things haven't gone right for one reason or another, but they have stuck with it and now we are playing pretty well. It is a great feeling."

Along with the Wildcats, senior Parker Cates seemed to catch fire at just the right time.

The Wildcat forward accounted for both Wildcat goals in Thursday's regional title match and he finished with six goals

over the three-game span.

"I am very happy for Parker because he, like a lot of other players, have had a rough year at times especially offensively," York said. "But he has put in a lot of work over the four years and has made a commitment to get better. It is just good to see him have success. He, and the rest of the team, have had a good week-and-a-half of soccer."

It didn't take long for the Wildcats to get on the board as Cates scored the first goal two minutes into the contest and from there Louisburg (7-10-2) was able to take control of the possession.

The Wildcats put up 15 shots on goal for the match and held Coffeyville to just six attempts as Louisburg played solid defense thanks to senior goalie Michael Minster along with the defensive front of Jairus Brown, Hunter Mitchell, Cale Schneider and Scott Murphy.

"Coffeyville really didn't have too many good looks at the goal and their shots came from pretty far out," York said. "Still I thought that Michael made some good saves back there and our defense played well, too."

Later in the first half, the Wildcats doubled their lead when sophomore Raistlin Brewer took a shot that bounced around near the goal and Cates was there to knock it in.

Louisburg's defense didn't allow many Coffeyville opportunities in the second half and the Wildcats left with their sixth regional title in the last 10 years.

"It was great to see the kids knock down that wall and get that big win that we have been looking for," York said. "Now they know what it feels like to win something big like this and it only helps us for later in the playoffs and also into next season."



It will get a lot more difficult for the Wildcats in their state quarterfinal match Tuesday. Louisburg will square off with Rose Hill, the No. 1 ranked team in the state and defending state champion. The match is set to begin at 7 p.m. at Rose Hill High School.

“They are a very good team and they are the No. 1 team in the state for a reason,” York said. “They are a very experienced group with a lot of seniors that have played in a lot of big games. We are going to have our hands full, but I am excited about the opportunity and to see what our guys can do.”