

Wildcats shutout Bonner Springs to end busy week



Louisburg senior Herman Knipp puts a shot on goal Thursday against Bonner Springs in Louisburg. The Wildcats shutout Bonner Springs 4-0 to finish a span of three games in four days.

Three games in four days might make some teams a little weary, but for the Louisburg High School soccer team, it had plenty of gas left in the tank.

The Wildcats hosted Bonner Springs on Thursday and used a big second half to pull away for a 4-0 victory to get their second win on the week. Louisburg finished the long week with a 2-1 record and bounced back strong after a tough loss to Piper on Sept. 19 that started the stretch of games.

“I was a little concerned about how guys would handle this hectic week, especially playing Piper first because they are probably the best team we have faced so far this year,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “Plus we played the two games previous on turf and that is a big difference. At the same time. I think the boys held up well. I think we do enough fitness during practice to help prepare for this and they took good care of themselves. We actually looked like we were pretty fresh, which was a good thing.”

Louisburg (6-2) had plenty of scoring opportunities throughout

the contest against Bonner Springs, especially in the first half. The Wildcats had seven shots on goal in the first 40 minutes, but their first goal came thanks to a corner kick.

Junior Grant Ryals sent the corner into the box and fellow junior Scott Murphy headed the ball in the back of the net in the 22nd minute to give Louisburg a 1-0 lead and the score stayed that way at halftime.

Senior Herman Knipp opened the game with the shot on goal after a pass from Raistlin Brewer but was saved by the Bonner Springs goalie. Senior Noah Juarez just missed on a free kick a few minutes later and also had a shot on goal saved.

Senior Ty Martin, sophomore Jonathan Ventre and Knipp also had shots on goal before halftime, but couldn't increase the Wildcat lead.

Eventually those shots started to go in.

Juarez made it 2-0 early in the second half when he converted a penalty kick after Ventre was fouled in the box. Then in the 52nd minute, Juarez made it a three-goal lead when he scored on a breakaway opportunity.



Kris Light (right)

**celebrates with
teammate Grant Ryals
following Ryals' goal
Thursday in the win
over Bonner Springs.**

"We had a little trouble finishing early, but then the flood gates opened and we did alright," Conley said. "I told the guys at halftime that it was only 1-0 and that anything could happen. We are one bad ball out of the back and we are tied. We came out and I thought we really controlled the pace of the game and I thought we did a great job in the midfield.

"We may not have finished as well as we would have liked, but we didn't hang our heads and kept grinding away and I am definitely pleased with that."

Ryals sealed the win with a goal in the 61st minute and the Wildcat defense was able to take care of the rest. Bonner Springs had minimal chances on goal and junior goalkeeper Ambrose Stefan earned his second consecutive shutout.

Louisburg returns to action Tuesday when it travels to Tonganoxie and then will get back into Frontier League action Thursday when the Wildcats travel to Paola.

For a photo gallery of the match, please [click here](#).

Louisburg blanks Eudora

Coming off a frustrating loss to Piper just a day earlier, the Louisburg players didn't seem to let it get them down when they traveled to Eudora on Sept. 20.

The Wildcats jumped on the Cardinals from the start and never looked back in a 4-0 win as they scored pair of goals in each half.

"I was a little worried about our legs at Eudora with back-to-back games on turf in the heat," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We had kids banged up all over the place, but they just grinded and did their job. It was awesome."

Freshman Landon Johnson, juniors Grant Ryals and Scott Murphy, along with sophomore Jonathan Ventre all scored goals for the Wildcats. Senior Noah Juarez had a pair of assists and junior Raistlin Brewer also had an assist.

Louisburg took a 2-0 lead at halftime, but Eudora threatened to cut the lead in half right after halftime with a good look at the goal, but goalie Ambrose Stefan turned the shot away.

"That really was a great save by Ambrose and if Eudora makes that, the game might be a little different," Conley said. "After that save, I think that really hurt Eudora's confidence and we were able to capitalize."

Wildcats lose in final seconds to Piper

Louisburg made the journey to Piper High School on Sept. 19 and were minutes away from leaving there with a victory.

Instead, Piper scored two goals in the final three minutes to steal a 2-1 victory from Louisburg. The Wildcats held a 1-0 lead through much of the game after a goal from senior Noah Juarez, but a defensive miscue gave Piper an open look at the goal with three minutes left to tie the match.

With 45 seconds remaining in regulation, Piper took a shot on goal, but the Pirate player accidentally struck the ball off his shin guard instead of his foot, which resulted in a floating shot over the outstretched arms on Louisburg goalie Ambrose Stefan.

"In the second half Piper changed their formation and they were super direct and aggressive," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley

said. "The last 15 minutes we were defending for our lives. It was kind of demoralizing because the boys played well enough to win and that is the part that hurt the most. That is probably on me because when you lose like that it is probably a coach's issue and I should have done something different.

"It was kind of weird last shot that gave them the winning goal. There really wasn't anything Ambrose could have done on that. It was just unfortunate for us. But I told the guys we weren't going to let this loss define our season and we didn't."

Wildcats pull off big comeback in win over Baldwin



Louisburg junior Grant Ryals passes the ball up the field during Thursday's home contest with Baldwin. The Wildcats scored four unanswered goals to rally for a 4-3 win over the Bulldogs, including a goal from Ryals.

Down three goals with less than a half to play, the odds were certainly against the Louisburg High School boys soccer team.

The Wildcats were struggling during their home contest with Baldwin on Thursday and the Bulldogs, which had a below .500

record going in, had taken control of the game with a two goal lead at halftime and added another early in the second half.

Despite all that, Louisburg defied the odds and pulled off an improbable comeback. The Wildcats scored four consecutive goals in the second half to rally for a 4-3 win over Baldwin.

With the game tied late in the contest, junior Noah Juarez had a free kick at the top of the 18-yard mark and put it in the upper left portion of the net for the game winner. Just minutes earlier, Louisburg was fouled in the box and Juarez was awarded the penalty kick and tied the match.



Senior Noah Juarez heads the ball away during the Wildcats' game with Baldwin on Thursday.

"After being down three goals, it could have been very easy to become selfish and give up, but the boys didn't," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "I did love how our kids fought and played with such desired and passion. We showed the will to win and that was great to see.

"We really did not see much adversity yet this season and I was interested to see how we would respond. We just kept attacking and attacking. Sometimes you need to do the intangibles to find success and this was one of those nights."

The Wildcats (4-1) chipped away at the Bulldog lead in the second half as senior Herman Knipp and junior Grant Ryals each had a goal to keep Louisburg in it.

Knipp received a through ball, dribbled past a Baldwin defender and shot it past the Baldwin goalkeeper to give Louisburg its first goal. Moments later, Ryals received a pass from Juarez, got his shoulders over the ball and found the back of the net.

“Herman and I have been working hard on learning the types of runs to make and this was the perfect run with a terrific pass to get us on the board,” Conley said. “Grant’s goal was a quality goal. At that point, the boys kept fighting and you could see they believed they had a chance to win and this is when they started to play much better.”

Following Ryals’ goal, the Wildcats controlled more of possession and the Louisburg defense stiffened up. All that set up Juarez’s heroics with the penalty kick and game-winning goal.

As much as the Wildcats were happy with the comeback win, they also realize they made it a little difficult on themselves with a slow start.

“To be quite honest, I feel we didn’t deserve to win that game at all,” Conley said. “Baldwin controlled the game and the pace of play for the majority of the game. As a team, we were flat and did not communicate. We were kind of just going through the motions. To win, let alone, get a positive result, we feel very fortunate.

“This should provide a great example that we can take nothing for granted. I believe they may have been looking at their record and we took something for granted. We had no emotion and were just going through the motions. I believe that this is a great example of what we can accomplish.”

The Wildcats hope to build on that momentum on what will be a busy week. Louisburg travels to Piper tonight to kickoff a stretch of three games in four days. The Wildcats will travel to Eudora on Tuesday and return home this Thursday when they host Bonner Springs.

“This week is going to show what we are made of,” Conley said. “It potentiality could be a great week or a tough week for us. These three games are going to be tough and we are going to have to work for everything. It’s going to be a lot of fun.”

To view a photo gallery from the contest, make sure to click [here](#).

De Soto hands Louisburg first loss

In what was its first loss of the season, the Louisburg boys soccer team never got a chance to mount a comeback thanks to Mother Nature.

Storms delayed the start of the Wildcats’ game at De Soto on Sept. 13 and the game was eventually called in the second half due to lightning.

Unfortunately for Louisburg, De Soto’s Ethan Rodriguez scored a goal with three minutes left in the first half to give his team 1-0 lead and that is how it finished. Since the two teams completed a full half, the game was considered official and will not be made up.

Wildcats down rival Paola, stay perfect



Louisburg senior defender Kolten Ragan clears the ball away during the Wildcats' home contest with Paola last Tuesday. Louisburg defeated Paola 3-0 and won its third straight game to begin the season.

The Louisburg High School boys soccer team experienced the best of both worlds following last Tuesday's contest with Paola.

Not only did the Wildcats get a chance to knock off their rival in a 3-0 victory at home, but Louisburg's victory over Paola also kept the Wildcats perfect in the standings as they recorded their third straight win to start the season.

It wasn't easy as the Paola defense made the Wildcats work for it, especially early on as several Louisburg shots sailed either just wide of the goal or were saved by the Paola goalie.

The Wildcats eventually broke through with a goal in the first half and two more in the second to preserve the win.



Herman Knipp celebrates with teammate Calvin Cassida (8) after scoring Louisburg's first goal Tuesday against Paola.

"I feel that we did a great job possessing the ball and making some quality connecting passes throughout the midfield," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "I feel we did a very nice job of dictating the pace of play and how the game was controlled. It is really nice seeing how this team keeps progressing and improving each night out.

"I feel that we did face a little adversity within the final third. I do not think we were aggressive enough or we tried to play that perfect pass. With that being said, the boys work rate was high and we posted a lot of pressure against their back four."

Louisburg's attack did put pressure on the Paola defense early as the Wildcats had several opportunities in the game's opening minutes. Sophomore Jonathan Ventre, junior Christian Scholtz and senior Curran Conklin had shots on goal, while Noah Juarez hit a header off a corner kick but it was saved by the Paola keeper.

Senior Herman Knipp finally snuck one past the Paola defense with a goal in the 35th minute on an assist from senior Calvin Cassida to give the Wildcats a 1-0 lead and they would take

that into halftime.

In the 56th minute, Juarez got in on the scoring as he took a shot from the top of the box and put it in the left corner of the net to give Louisburg a two-goal lead. Knipp then added his second goal in the 73rd minute to all but seal the win.

“Herman did a nice job of playing simple and taking what the other team gave him,” Conley said. “We have been working on changing the type of run he has been making and it showed. With our scoring the way it has been, we have been very balanced. I feel it shows how any given night anyone is capable of putting a few in the back of the net.”

Defensively, the Wildcats didn't give the Panthers much of an opportunity for good looks at the goal. Paola did have two shots on goal in the second half, but the Louisburg defense held on and goalie Ambrose Stefan recorded his second shutout of the season.

The Wildcats were scheduled to square off with Spring Hill on Thursday but due to the weather, the game was postponed and moved to Oct. 17.

Louisburg will try for its fourth straight win this Tuesday when it travels to defending Frontier League champion De Soto. Junior varsity is scheduled for 4:30 p.m., and varsity will play at 6 p.m.

To view a photo gallery from the game, please [click here](#).

Junior varsity stays perfect with shutout of Paola

The Louisburg High School junior varsity soccer team put on a goal-scoring show last Tuesday against Paola as the Wildcats rolled to a 10-0 victory to run their record to 3-0 on the season.

Eli Minster recorded a hat trick with three goals and teammates Chris Williams and David Holiday each had a pair of scores. Ryan Haight, Will Frank and Brian Arnold also added a goal.

Jacob Andersen recorded two assists, while Ignacio Huesa and Holiday added an assist of their own. Huesa and Thomas Arnett combined for the shutout.

Wildcat soccer perfect to start season



Louisburg goalie Ambrose Stefan slides in for a save during Thursday's home opener against Ottawa. Stefan and the Wildcats started the season with back to back wins over Ottawa and Fort Scott.

There was a little anxiousness and excitement heading into the home opener for the Louisburg High School boys soccer team.

The Wildcats were about to have their first true test of the season Thursday against a team they haven't been able to beat in the last two years. A little anxiousness is to be expected,

but one kick seemed to change all that.

Senior Noah Juarez nailed a penalty kick eight minutes into the contest, and from there, the Wildcats settled down and dominated the Cyclones in the 3-1 victory. After a win against Fort Scott earlier in the week, the Wildcats are now off to a 2-0 start.

“That definitely eased the nerves,” Louisburg head coach Kyle Conley said. “The first five minutes we were all over the place. We were a little too amped up and running around like crazy. It looked like little kid soccer there for a while. We calmed down a little bit, had a couple great balls through and Herman (Knipp) had a great run. Noah then knocked home the penalty kick. It was a good result for us definitely.”

It was all set up by good through ball to senior Herman Knipp, who was then fouled in the box and the Wildcats were awarded the penalty kick. That play seemed to give the Wildcats all the momentum as they added another goal two minutes later.

Junior Scott Murphy usually spends most of his time on defense, but Murphy got an opportunity to score as he dribbled through the Ottawa defense in the box and his shot went past the diving Cyclone for the goal on an assist from Knipp. Murphy nearly added another goal later in the half, but his shot was just wide of the net.



Defender Kris Light heads the ball away Thursday against Ottawa.

“He probably won’t get a lot of opportunities on goal, but Scott should have had a second goal too which would have been awesome,” Conley said. “He is just a workhorse and that goal he had was just a work goal. That was a great time to get his first varsity goal.”

The score gave the Wildcats a little cushion to work with as they took a two-goal lead at halftime. The Louisburg defense, on the other hand, made things difficult for the Cyclones as well.

Conley shifted several players in and out of the backfield and Ottawa didn’t many good attempts on goal. When there were shots, Louisburg goalie Ambrose Stefan turned them away.

Kolten Ragan, Curran Conklin, Jacob Benne, Kris Light, Ty Martin, Calvin Cassida and Murphy all provided crucial minutes on defense.

“Ambrose did a good job in goal and we limited their chances,” Conley said. “We gave them shots from 25 to 30 yards out and he has more than enough time to react and save those. Defensively we were a little shaky at first, but we did OK and there are going to be growing pains. When we played Fort Scott we didn’t get a lot of work, so that was good to see them bend but don’t break.”

Louisburg made it even more difficult for Ottawa as it added another goal early in the second half. Juarez received a pass from teammate Grant Ryals and Juarez took a shot from 18 yards out and put it in the upper right corner of the net to all but seal the win for the Wildcats.

Ottawa added a goal with 23 minutes left in the contest, but could get no closer.

The Wildcats will try to make it three wins in a row today when they host Paola. The varsity match is set for 4 p.m.

“With this league being so good we just have to take it one game at a time,” Conley said. “I don’t think Paola is going to come and lay down for us. It is a rivalry game again and kids have to get hyped up and get after it in practice. It doesn’t get any easier with Spring Hill and De Soto coming up soon and then the gauntlet begins.”

To view a photo gallery from the contest, feel free to click [here](#).

Wildcats rout Fort Scott

Once its season opener got underway against Fort Scott, there was little doubt on who was going to win the contest.

The Louisburg High School boys soccer team opened its season in Fort Scott on Aug. 30 and put together an offensive show. The Wildcats pummeled the Tigers with seven first half goals and Louisburg came away with the 10-0 win.

For the game, the Wildcats had 18 corner kicks and never let the Tigers have much of an opportunity on goal.

“I never saw in 18 corners in a game before, but we had tons and tons of pressure,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “Our finishing was atrocious. I was really worried about it and we were trying to make that perfect hit instead of just slotting it where it needed to go. Fort Scott is rebuilding with a new coach and he is trying to institute new things. I thought the kids played well though.”

Four different Wildcats had two goals on the night. Herman Knipp, Landon Johnson, Jonathan Ventre and Noah Juarez each had a pair of scores, while Christian Scholtz and David Holiday each had a goal.

Juarez added three assists in the victory, while Curran Conklin, Knipp, Scholtz and Grant Ryals each finished with an assist as well.

Wildcats ready to defend regional title with new coach



Noah Juarez (right) looks up the field during the team's annual scrimmage Friday. Juarez is one of several returning players returning from last season's regional championship team and was named captain with fellow senior Kolten Ragan (background) and junior Grant Ryals.

The Louisburg High School boys soccer team caught fire at the right time last season.

After recording just four wins during the regular season, the Wildcats reeled off three straight victories to capture the program's sixth regional title and a spot in the state quarterfinals.

That may have been nine months ago, but Louisburg hopes it can use some of the momentum and confidence to get off to a good start in 2016.

“I would think the boys should have some excitement in regards to winning a regional title from last year,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “That should give them some confidence with their abilities and success always promotes a positive attitude.”

Conley is excited to get going himself as he is in his first season with the Wildcats after taking over for Ben York, who served as head coach for 13 years. In the spring, Conley led the girls’ soccer team to a regional title in the program’s first year and hopes the boys can experience similar success.

There has been a transition period, but the players are getting to used what Conley expects and a different style of play.

“Practice has been going well,” Conley said. “According to the boys what we are doing is vastly different than they are use too, but that is to be expected with a new coach. The boys have great attitudes and work ethic and in that regard I couldn’t ask for anything else from them.

“I appreciate the fact that they do not make excuses and try to play the way we want them too. I am very excited to see how this team does. I wish I had another week of practice, like every other coach, but I am very excited to see this team compete.”

The Wildcats have a strong core returning from last season’s squad and it starts with senior Noah Juarez. The Louisburg midfielder is a three-time all-state and all-Frontier League player and will provide stability in the middle of the field.



Scott Murphy heads the ball away from teammate Chris Williams Friday during the team's annual scrimmage.

Juarez was named team captain, along with fellow senior Kolten Ragan and junior Grant Ryals. Junior Christian Scholtz and Ryals will join Juarez in the midfield, which is one of the team's strengths heading to the season.

Juarez returns as the team's leading scorer as he recorded 11 goals a season ago to go along with nine assists.

"Noah is a quality player and even a better young man," Conley said, "He has a great skill set, but I know he can get even better. So we are going to challenge him to take his game to another level this year. I then expect for his teammates to also pick up their individual game up to try to make his intensity better.

"I envision this year being kind of the icing on the cake to close out Noah's senior year. I feel this year will give him the opportunity to open a lot of doors collegiately. My expectation for him is to push himself to better his game, but also make his teammates better around him."

There has been a lot of competition at some of the other spots so far this season as juniors Raistlin Brewer and David Holiday, along with sophomores Jacob Andersen, Eric Vazquez

and freshman Landon Johnson are all competing for spots in the midfield.

Senior Herman Knipp and sophomore Jonathan Ventre will see a lot of time at the forward spot.

However, the position on the field with the most questions for the Wildcats is on defense. Louisburg lost almost its entire starting defense from a season ago and Conley is looking for some new players to step up.

Seniors Jacob Benne, Curran Conklin, Ty Martin, Calvin Cassida, Ragan, along with juniors Kris Light and Scott Murphy will all see playing time in the back. Junior Ambrose Stefan will also begin the season as the team's goalie.

"Defense is a very interesting aspect to our team," Conley said. "We have about six to eight guys who could play four to five spots depending on our formation. These players are also very similar type players. So it is going to come down to (today) for us to determine starters and to be quite honest, it will be something that will/could change each game. We have several guys with some varsity experience so that helps, but graduating almost our entire defense last year is going to be tough to replace. As of now, Ambrose is going to be our starting varsity goalkeeper. He has beat out the other two goalkeepers and has been the most consistent throughout our preseason."

Like most other seasons, the schedule will be a difficult one for Louisburg. The Frontier League provides several challenges, including teams like De Soto and Baldwin, who have made deep runs in the playoffs in the last few seasons.

"As I think everyone already knows, we play in a ridiculously difficult league," Conley said. "My goal is to make sure we are always prepared, focused, ready to compete and never get outworked in a game. I think we have the skill sets to be a driving force in league this year, but it is going to be very

difficult. I feel the boys' league record from last year is also some motivation for this season because they know they are better than that."

Louisburg opens its season Tuesday when it travels to Fort Scott. Varsity is scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. The Wildcats' home opener is set for 4 p.m. on Thursday against Ottawa.

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.

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 Sports Zone.

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.

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 upperclassman 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.”

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.

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 then 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.”

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.”

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 40th 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 13th 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 71st.



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.