

Six Wildcats earn spot on all-league soccer; Gassman, McManigal named first team



Cade Gassman, Colin McManigal, Toby Espina-Roca, Brecon Klugman, Matthew Sword and Gavin York were all recently named to the All-Frontier League Soccer Team.

It was an up and down year for the Louisburg boys soccer team, especially when it came down to Frontier League action.

After a slow start, the Wildcats found their footing and finished with a 9-7-2 record that earned them a spot in the regional championship match. In what was a difficult league slate, Louisburg had its fair share of bright spots, including a win over league champion Spring Hill.

Louisburg also had plenty of talent on its roster and the rest of the league coaches took notice. The Wildcats were awarded six spots on the all-league team that was announced earlier this week.

Senior forwards Cade Gassman and Colin McManigal earned first team honors, while senior midfielder Toby Espina-Roca and senior goalie Brecon Klugman were named to the second team. Senior defenders Matthew Sword and Gavin York were honorable mention selections.

"The last few years, I learned quickly that the Frontier League is legit in Kansas soccer," Louisburg coach Bobby

Bovaird said. "With the top teams in the league, it was pretty clear that Spring Hill had the dominant season, even though we were one of their five losses this season, and they had eight kids earn all-league honors. We had two at each level and I feel like we could have placed a few others on that list as well."



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

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

McManigal led the team in scoring with 12 goals on the year to go along with three assists. It was a 1-2 combo that was big for the Wildcats this season.



“Cade and Colin have made such an impact on our program over the last four years,” Bovaird said. “Many times this season, officials and opposing coaches have mentioned how fun Cade is to watch and several have said that he’s a special kid. He truly is an amazing and skilled player, but the thing is when you look at his stats for this year, you can tell that he was 100 percent about the Wildcat team. That’s one of the most commendable things about him, and that’s what I hope college coaches notice the most about him. Sure he’s got crazy skills, but he’s a player who will bring so much more to the team.

“This season, Colin was the epitome of overcoming adversity. You’d watch the kid get the ball at his feet and power through 2, 3, sometimes 4 defenders and get a shot off. He knows how to use his stature and determination to go to goal, and you won’t see him hit a ton of fancy and flashy moves; you just see him drop his shoulder and take kids on.”



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

“This season, Toby was our soccer guy,” Bovaird said. “I mean, he lives and breathes soccer, and at halftime of nearly every game, he gave some great insight to what was happening on the field.”



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

“Brecon did amazing this year, and his skills in goal really

kept us in quite a few of our game,” Bovaird said. “All this considering the fact that his junior year was his first time playing high school soccer, and he split time in goal at the JV level. This year, he jumped into the role of varsity goalie and was incredible.”



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

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



“Matthew’s presence on the back line was incredible this

season,” Bovaird said. “He was calm and collected when under pressure, and he was a vocal leader to the guys on the field, as well as a huge mentor to Brecon in goal. Matthew was an outstanding leader for us on and off the field.

“Gavin started out great at forward, getting three goals and having one assist, but once he moved back to defense, it was a very effective change for the team. He worked with Matthew and Brecon so well at defense, and I find myself wondering what if we had made that adjustment sooner in the season.”

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE SOCCER

First Team

Gustavo Pinto, Bonner Springs, junior

Timmy Shockey, Bonner Springs, junior

Brenan Kuzmic, Tonganoxie, senior

Parker Hurla, Eudora, senior

Caleb Brueckner, Spring Hill, senior

Jacob Brueckner, Spring Hill, senior

Caleb Carr, Baldwin, senior

Jesse Hopper, Baldwin, senior

Cade Gassman, Louisburg, senior

Colin McManigal, Louisburg, senior

Goalie: Jackson McWilliams, Tonganoxie, junior

Second Team

Tavian Cruse, Bonner Springs, senior

Trent Barnes, Tonganoxie, senior

Iker Ragues Romas, Tonganoxie, junior

Joel Brown, Ottawa, senior

Jonathan VanStaden, Ottawa, senior

Josue Navarro, Ottawa, junior

Carden Escobar, Paola, senior

Jaycob Campos, Spring Hill, senior

Cooper Carr, Baldwin, freshman

Toby Espina-Roca, Louisburg, senior

GOALIE: Brecon Klugman, Louisburg, senior

Honorable Mention

Logan Jackson, Bonner Springs, senior

Anthony Shermerhorn, Bonner Springs, senior

Gavin Shupe, Tonganoxie, junior

Andrew Gomez, Eudora, senior

Christian Koehn, Eudora, junior

Derek Lehmann, Eudora, junior

Hayden Worden, Paola, senior

Jake Rainforth, Spring Hill, sophomore

Zack Brueckner, Spring Hill, sophomore

Denis Martinez, Spring Hill, junior

Seth Oberkrom, Spring Hill, sophomore

Parker Simon, Spring Hill, sophomore

Eli Dick, Baldwin, senior

Ian Rimmer, Baldwin, junior

Gavin York, Louisburg, senior

Matthew Sword, Louisburg, senior

GOALIE: Caden Englert, Baldwin, junior; Nate Steinlage, Eudora, sophomore; Blake Ramsey, Paola, senior

Week 9 Athlete of the Week: Cade Gassman



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week nine of the fall sports season, sponsored by Edward Jones-Craig Holtzen.

CADE GASSMAN, SENIOR, BOYS SOCCER

Louisburg senior Cade Gassman has been the glue that held the Wildcat boys soccer team together throughout the season. He came up big for the Wildcats last Thursday during the team's regional championship match at Bishop Ward. Gassman scored the game tying goal in the second half that eventually forced overtime.

Although the Wildcats eventually fell in three overtimes, 2-1, Gassman was a key cog in the Wildcats' attack. In his career as a four-year starter for Louisburg, he is second in program history with 47 goals and third with 26 assists.

"He has been an integral part of the team," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "He's like a coach on the field – the guys look up to him, they follow his lead, and they play more cohesively because of him."

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday morning during the fall season and the winner is selected by Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.

Previous winners:

Week 1: Layne Ryals

Week 2: Nathan Vincent

Week 3: Emma Vohs

Week 4: Claire Brown

Week 5: Ashton Moore

Week 6: Colin McManigal

Week 7: Allie Kennedy

Week 8: Declan Battle



Wildcats suffer heartbreak in triple-overtime loss to Bishop Ward



Louisburg head coach Bobby Bovaird consoles Wildcat goalie Brecon Klugman shortly after the Wildcats' 2-1 loss to Bishop Ward on Thursday in the regional championship game at Bishop Ward High School. The Wildcats lost in three overtimes, with the deciding goal coming on a penalty kick late in the third OT.

KANSAS CITY, Kan. – With the right to advance to the state quarterfinals on the line, Louisburg and Bishop Ward did everything possible for their respective teams to keep their season alive.

In the end, two penalty kicks decided the winner of the Class 4-1A regional championship match.

Bishop Ward converted a penalty kick in the first half to take the lead, then after Louisburg tied it in the second half, the match went into extra time.

In the third overtime, Louisburg was called for a foul in the box and the Cyclones were awarded their second penalty kick and converted to hand the Wildcats a 2-1 defeat.

It was a crushing end to the Wildcats' season in what was an evenly played match throughout.

"I don't think I've ever seen so many tears flowing after a game as I did Thursday night," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "The talent of this group, combined with their work ethic, coachability, desire, and unity, was something amazing to be a part of. They definitely played very well toward the end of the season, and they bought into the program this year. They overcame a rough start and started to peak at just the right time to make a run in the postseason. None of them wanted it to end so soon, but they did everything they possibly could to keep it going."



Louisburg senior Cade Gassman tries to settle the ball Thursday at Bishop Ward.

The loss enough was difficult to stomach, but the fact the difference the match was a pair of penalty kicks, made it even tougher on the Wildcat players.

"The frustrating thing about that game was that we played so well considering the circumstances and adversities we faced," Bovaird said. "We controlled possession of the ball for most of the game, and we had them on the ropes many times. I mean, we had 8 corners to their 2, and we had 13 crosses to their 9.

We played tough defense, but it's frustrating that two subjective calls decided the outcome of the game."

Louisburg faced adversity from the start as the Wildcats had to play without two of their starters – Matthew Sword and Jackson Olson – who were out of town competing at FFA nationals and the Wildcats relied on their bench to help pick up the slack.



Senior Gavin York heads the ball out of the back for Louisburg.

The Wildcats did more than that. Seniors Andrew Brown and Brock Varns helped fill the void at Olson's outside-mid spot, while senior Gavin York moved over to Sword's sweeper spot. Another senior, Caden French, filled in as an outside back.

"At the end of the day, a game like Thursday's regional championship is a testament to a team's character," Bovaird said. "The fact that we were missing two starters, one of whom being our defensive leader (Sword), and we were on a field that really didn't seem to fit game standards and we still took it to the wire shows the grit that our guys have.

“They entered that match as the underdogs, but they battled every minute of the game. My hats off to Gavin for transitioning to sweeper and playing a great game, Caden for stepping in and marking some of their fastest players, and Andrew for sliding to the opposite side and giving us some offensive presence. Those three were ready to do their part for the team, and I think they made a phenomenal impact in the absence of Jackson and Matthew.”



Louisburg senior Caden French clears the ball away for the Wildcat defense Thursday against Bishop Ward.

Bishop Ward opened the scoring in the first half as the Wildcats were called for a foul in the box on a breakaway attempt by Ward. The Cyclones converted the penalty kick and took a 1-0 lead at halftime.

It stayed that way till midway through the second half. Louisburg senior Colin McManigal took the corner kick and senior Cade Gassman headed the ball in for the equalizer.

“That was the boost we needed,” Bovaird said. “At that point in the game, we were trailing and the game was three-fourths

of the way finished. In soccer, if you're not scoring goals by that point, things start changing. Players get desperate, they lose focus on the game plan, and they start questioning if they have what it takes to pull out a win. Cade's goal gave our guys the extra wind they needed to push through the end of regular time."

The Wildcats took 17 shots for the match, including seven by Gassman to lead the Louisburg attack. Senior Toby Espina-Roca and sophomore Emmett White had three and two shots, respectively.



Louisburg goalie Brecon Klugman jumps up for a save in the first half of Thursday's regional championship game at Bishop Ward.

Louisburg senior goalie Brecon Klugman made sure it stayed tied throughout the overtime periods. Klugman finished with three saves and five blocked shots.

Klugman really stepped up in the second overtime period with a save and three blocked shots, including one where he used his body to deflect a Cyclone shot on a breakaway attempt.

“What a phenomenal season Brecon’s had,” Bovaird said. “Brecon came out for the first time last year and only played half the time in goal on junior varsity, and the other time he spent on the field in defense. This year, he slid right into the starting goalie position, and he made some incredible saves that night. If it hadn’t been for his athleticism and growth over the season, we wouldn’t have been in the position we were in at the end of the season.”

With 27 seconds left in the third overtime, Bishop Ward went on the attack and had several scrums in front of the goal. All that led to a Wildcat foul in the box when a player slid to make a play on the loose ball as the Ward player was going for it.



Louisburg senior Toby Espina-Roca flies through the air to knock the ball away Thursday.

The official awarded the Cyclones the penalty kick and they converted to take the regional championship – and at the same time – 15 Wildcat seniors saw their high school careers come to an end.

Gassman, McManigal, Brecon Klugman, Varns, Andrew Brown, Jordan Brown, Ayden Deterding, French, Owen Barber, York,

Sword, Olson, Dagon Klugman, Espina-Roca and Kaven Bartlett all suited up for Louisburg for the final time.

“My heart is broken for the team, especially the seniors,” Bovaird said. “I really don’t like speaking negatively of game officials, but I strongly feel that you either need to take control of that style of play early in the game and call it consistently, or you need to allow the players to decide the game and avoid making those powerfully impacting subjective calls.”

The Wildcats finished their season with a 9-7-2 record, including wins in three of their last four matches.

“The last few years, we’ve talked about the program being a family, and every year I see more and more what that means,” Bovaird said. “We had the motto ‘United’ this year, and that’s what we were. In the face of adversity, we stepped up and were ready for the challenge. I’m nothing but proud of these guys, and I’m truly going to miss this senior class.”

Wildcats advance to regional title game with win over Maranatha



Louisburg’s Colton Blue (right) and Colin McManigal celebrate

a goal Tuesday in the Wildcats' 5-2 victory over Maranatha Academy in the Class 4-1A regional semifinal in Louisburg.

The Louisburg boys soccer team did exactly what it wanted to begin the playoffs – continue its hot streak from the regular season.

After getting two wins to end the regular season, the Wildcats put together another positive result – this time in the Class 4-1A regional semifinals. Louisburg hosted Maranatha Academy and came away with a 5-2 victory.

The Wildcats scored four second half goals, despite a muddy and sloppy playing surface, and they are moving onto the regional championship match tonight at Bishop Ward.

“We had a great game overall, despite the conditions,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “These days, so many club teams and high school teams have the luxury of playing on nice turf surfaces, but when it comes down to it, soccer is a sport played on the grass. We have a grass practice field and a grass game field. That’s our home stadium, and we’re very proud of it.

“Statistically, Tuesday’s game was most likely going to be the final home game for our seniors, and I wanted them to be able to play one more game on that field. Playing there, especially when it’s wet and muddy, creates adversity, but we’ve shown time and again that it’s an advantage for us. On top of all that, the fact that we were able to step up to adversity and unfavorable conditions like the wet field shows that we’re capable of handling any adversity thrown at us. You need that preparation for the postseason.”



Sophomore Emmett White puts a shot on goal Tuesday against Maranatha.

It didn't take long for the Wildcats to get on the board and they were able to play from in front early.

Senior Gavin York sent a shot into the box and it ricocheted off the Maranatha keeper. The ball bounced to senior Colin McManigal, who put it away in the empty net to give Louisburg a 1-0 advantage three minutes into the contest.

Louisburg (9-6-2) had several good looks at the goal in the first half, but couldn't get it to go in, but still led at halftime.

For the game, the Wildcats outshot Maranatha 42-8 and had 14 corner kicks on the night. Louisburg also had 17 shots on target.

Those opportunities started to go in after halftime. Senior Toby Espina-Roca took a shot near the 18 that flew past the Maranatha keeper, and then sophomore Colton Blue scored to give the Wildcats a 3-0 advantage early in the second half.

Senior Jordan Brown gave the Wildcats their fourth score on a shot near the goal, then after two Maranatha goals, the Wildcats sealed the win with their final tally.



Louisburg senior Cade Gassman wins a ball in the air Tuesday against Maranatha.

Senior Matthew Sword crossed the ball into the box and it found the foot of senior Dagon Klugman, who scored his first varsity goal, and the celebration was on.

“I love how we got organized from the very beginning of the game and were looking to put the ball in the back of the net,” Bovaird said. “Getting that first goal so early changed the tone of the game. In the second half, they really stepped things up, and I’m very proud of them for that. One thing I told the guys after the game is that this home field now has special meaning for our seniors. Anyone who was able to score a goal in that game, or any other game, will remember the

feeling of seeing the ball hit the net, they'll remember where they were when they scored that goal, and they'll remember what they did to make it happen. That's the incredible thing about this game."

Senior Cade Gassman led the Wildcats in the midfield and was aggressive from the beginning. Gassman led the Wildcats with 10 shots on the night, including five on target.

McManigal had eight shots, with four on target, while Blue finished with five shots and sophomore Emmett White had four. Espina-Roca and York each had three shots.



Wildcat senior Andrew Brown beats a Maranatha player to the ball Tuesday in Louisburg.

Now the Wildcats are preparing for the Class 4-1A regional championship game tonight at Bishop Ward. Louisburg is hoping to return to the state quarterfinals after falling to Bishop Miege in the same game a year ago.

They will do so without a pair of starters as Sword and Jackson Olson will be gone as they are competing at FFA

Nationals. Still, the Wildcats will rally together as they try to keep their season alive.

"We'll be facing adversity again in several ways," Bovaird said. "First, it's an away game on a field that historically has had very poor conditions, but we've shown that we can accommodate that. Second, we'll be without two starters, but we have considerable experience with our senior players and they've shown that they can adapt and overcome.

"Finally, it will be against a fast team with a higher seed, but we've stepped on the field with teams like Spring Hill and Piper and shown the Kansas soccer scene that we can not only compete with them, but also win against them. It'll be a tough game, but we're ready for the challenge."

Wildcats score five second half goals in shutout of Leavenworth



Louisburg senior Toby Espina-Roca celebrates after scoring one of the Wildcats' five second half goals Thursday in Leavenworth. The Wildcats defeated the Pioneers, 5-0.

LEAVENWORTH – The Louisburg boys soccer team closed out the regular season in style as the Wildcats played some of their

best soccer of the season at the right time.

Louisburg scored five second half goals and rolled to a 5-0 victory over Leavenworth. The Wildcats recorded back-to-back shutouts to conclude their schedule.

“That’s the thing about our win against Leavenworth – it was a huge confidence booster for a lot of reasons,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “It’s so important to finish on a positive, and ending our regular season with a win is a powerful boost for the guys’ morale.”

After what was a scoreless first half, the match turned into blowout in about 20 minutes time and the Wildcats had some fun doing it.

Senior Colin McManigal scored two of the five Wildcat goals in the second half and put the first one away two minutes after halftime. McManigal dribbled through defense, worked his way to the middle of the box and shot it past the goalie to give the Wildcats the lead.



Louisburg senior Colin McManigal celebrates one of his two

goals Thursday at Leavenworth.

About 15 minutes later, the Wildcats (8-6-2) struck again. Senior Toby Espina-Roca received a nice give-and-go pass from senior Cade Gassman. Espina-Roca dribbled into the box and put it past the Leavenworth goalie to put the Wildcats up two.

McManigal struck again in the 68th minute as he got a pass from Jackson Olson and then dribbled in near the goal to put another shot away.

"It's a lot of fun to watch Colin play up top like that," Bovaird said. "He gets the ball at his feet and finds a way to keep possession and move it through sometimes two or three defenders. He just keeps his feet moving and uses a low center of gravity to power through the defense. He's got this non-stop work ethic, and this year he's been a dominant presence on the field."

The scoring didn't stop there as a pair of Wildcat seniors got their first varsity goals just moments later.



Louisburg senior Jordan Brown is surrounded by his teammates following his first varsity goal Thursday at Leavenworth.

Senior forward Jordan Brown went down the middle of the field

on a breakaway, his shot bounced off the arm of Leavenworth defender and found the back of the net.

Louisburg did some more celebrating three minutes later. Senior Gavin York sent a free kick into the box and Caden French headed it in for his first varsity goal, which sealed the game for Louisburg.

Those two goals brought the Wildcat bench to their feet as they clinched their second straight win.

“That’s one of the best parts of being a coach – seeing the joy on a kid’s face when he scores his first goal,” Bovaird said. “I feel really fortunate to have been able to witness two guys experience that on Thursday evening. Soccer is one of those sports where sometimes players tend to measure their skill by how many goals they score or how many assists they have, but the truth of the matter is that players have an impact by making things happen on the field. Their movement, their positioning, their passes – they all add up in the bigger picture.

“Caden and Jordan are examples of how kids can contribute to the team, and I was so happy to see them be able to score a goal. It was icing on the cake.”



Louisburg senior Caden French (left) celebrates with his teammates after he scored his first varsity goal Thursday.

Gassman had a big day for Louisburg in the middle of the field as he finished with a pair of assists, while York and Olson also had an assist.

The Louisburg defense of York, Matthew Sword, Ayden Deterding, Owen Barber, French, Kaven Bartlett and Olson also had a big game, limiting Leavenworth to just six shots.

Senior goalie Brecon Klugman also had his second straight clean sheet with two saves and a blocked shot.

Now the Wildcats' focus shifts to the postseason. Louisburg is the No. 6 seed in this year's Class 4-1A regional tournament and the Wildcats will host Maranatha Academy at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday.

Should the Wildcats advance, they will play either Bishop Ward or Ottawa on Thursday for the regional championship.

"The postseason is always an exciting time, and I can't wait to see how our guys respond to the opportunity to be out there in the regional tournament," Bovaird said. "I think there's a

lot of positive energy with the guys, and that energy is infectious. They're playing really well, and this is the right time to start peaking.

"I told the guys how much fun this season has been. They've already made it such a memorable season, so I want them to be able to see it out the way they always dreamed it would be. I love their focus and competitiveness, and I think it's going to be an exciting run to the end."

Wildcats blank Piper on road to get back on winning track



Louisburg senior Matthew Sword slides in for a tackle on a Piper player Thursday at Piper High School. The Wildcats defeated the Pirates, 2-0.

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — In a season filled with ups and downs, the Louisburg boys soccer team wanted to go into the postseason on an up swing.

In their final week of the regular season, the Wildcats are off to a good start.

Louisburg traveled to Piper in its second to last game of the regular season and put together one of its better performances of the season. The Wildcats blanked the Pirates in a 2-0

victory as they got a goal in each half to get the win.

"I'd say this has to be one of our biggest wins this season," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Piper has beaten several teams we either lost to or tied. The guys seemed to be firing on all cylinders, and I'm pretty happy with that."

Piper, a Class 5A team, entered the match with a 9-5 record, but the Wildcats put together what could have been their best performance outside of their win against Spring Hill earlier in the season.

Louisburg moved the ball around and connected three to four passes together on multiple occasions to get good looks at the goal. For the game, the Wildcats took 13 shots and seven of those were on target.

"That's something we've been working on," Bovaird said. "I love how they're taking the concepts we work on at practice and apply them to the game. We've worked on supporting one another with our movement, communicating, and playing the way we're facing, and with those skills, we were able to make some great attacks against Piper."



Louisburg senior Cade Gassman pushes the ball up the field Tuesday at Piper.

The Wildcats got on the board in the 22nd minute when senior midfielder Toby Espina-Roca scored after a cross from sophomore Jacob Brown hit off a Piper defender and came right to the foot of Espina-Roca. He hit the shot from about 20 yards out and it found the upper-right corner of the net.

Espina-Roca, along with senior Cade Gassman, did a lot of work in the midfield to get the Wildcats multiple looks at the goal. Gassman led the way with three shots on the night, while Espina-Roca, Emmett White, Colin McManigal and Gavin York each had two.

"Toby and Cade have been playing together that way all season," Bovaird said. "They've got a great understanding of one another and when one goes forward, the other hangs back to cover. It takes a huge amount of pressure off our shoulders

when we're not trailing on the scoreboard.

"At halftime, I gave the old 'play like it's still 0-0' talk. I asked the guys to think about the moments leading up to Toby's goal – what they were doing on the field was what enabled that goal to happen. There's no need to change it, there's no need to get desperate. Play solid soccer, go into your tackles hard, and move off the ball to support one another."

The Wildcats (7-6-2) tacked on another goal midway through the second half. McManigal sent a corner kick into the box and it was headed in by a Piper player for an own goal and gave Louisburg the cushion it was looking for.

Defense also proved to be big for the Wildcats as senior goalie Brecon Klugman earned the clean sheet with six saves and a blocked shot. Klugman saved a breakaway opportunity and also another shot close to the goal.



Louisburg senior Gavin York clears a ball out of the back Tuesday against Piper.

The back line was strong for the Wildcats as Matthew Sword, York, Owen Barber, Ayden Deterding, Jackson Olson and Caden French all came up with big plays throughout the match.

“Gavin and Matthew were solid on defense,” Bovaird said. “Both were playing great games. Brecon had some amazing saves, too. We’ve been making our mark as a defensive-minded team lately, but with last night’s game, our guys really figured out some offensive things as well.”

The Wildcats travel to Leavenworth tonight for their regular season finale as they try to improve on their seeding for the postseason.

“It’s hard to predict how regionals will be set up, but with the win, it’s pretty likely that we’ll host our first round regional game,” Bovaird said. “A win against Leavenworth should secure the No. 6 seed for us. There’s a lot of variables and things beyond our control, so the game plan is to worry much less about how the seeds will turn out and focus more on what we’ve been doing to get us to this place.

“A win today will help give us confidence with what we’re doing. I keep telling the guys that the two things we can control are our attitudes and our actions. When we focus on those two things, we get consistency, and consistency is what will get us to our goals.”

Wildcats shutout at Topeka

On what was a rare Saturday game for Louisburg, the Wildcats traveled to Hummer Sports Park in Topeka for a match with Topeka High.



Louisburg senior defender Owen Barber clears the ball away from the goal Saturday in Topeka.

The Wildcats couldn't quite stay with the Class 6A program as they fell 2-0 as the Trojans scored a goal in each half.

Louisburg had three shots on target from senior Andrew Brown to the lead the Wildcats. Toby Espina-Roca, Colin McManigal, Caden French and Cade Gassman also took shots for Louisburg.

Wildcat seniors honored with shutout win over Turner on Senior Night



Louisburg senior Colin McManigal heads the ball away from Turner player Monday at home. The Wildcats got the win, 1-0, over Turner as they honored 15 seniors and a manager on Senior Night.

Monday's match with Turner may have just been a regular match on the schedule when it came to the standings, but for many on the Louisburg soccer team, it meant so much more.

It was Senior Night for the Wildcats that featured the largest senior class the Louisburg program has ever had. The Wildcats honored 16 seniors and their parents prior to the game and they wanted a memorable moment for what could be their final time playing on their home field.

The Wildcats got what they were looking for.

Turner was called for a handball in the box and the Wildcats were awarded a penalty kick late in the second half. Cade Gassman converted and the Wildcats held on for a 1-0 victory over the Golden Bears.

"Nothing is ever guaranteed, and I'm pleased with how the guys battled for a win on senior night," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Turner is a tough team with some talented individuals and some physical players. That game may end up being our final home game of the season, depending on how regionals pan out. I'm really happy for the guys for them to have earned a win at home on such a special night."

Louisburg's senior class of Andrew Brown, Brock Varns, Jackson Olson, Caden French, Jordan Brown, Matthew Sword, Brecon Klugman, Dagon Klugman, Gavin York, Ayden Deterding, Kaven

Bartlett, Cade Gassman, Toby Espina-Roca, Owen Barber, Colin McManigal and manager Tehya Harvey left their home field with a lasting memory.



Toby Espina-Roca settles the ball Monday during the Wildcats' home match with Turner.

"I first got to know these seniors as a spectator when they were freshmen, and then the next two seasons I got to work with almost all of them on the JV squad at one point or another," Bovaird said. "This year, they've made huge strides as a team, and I'm so proud of the resilience they've shown. It's a really special class, and to have 15 seniors is pretty neat. They're definitely cementing their contributions to the foundation of future teams with our program."

It was a back and forth match that left both teams with good chances to score. Even with all that, it was penalty kick that decided it all.

With eight minutes left in regulation, Jackson Olson took a shot in the box that hit the hand of a Turner player. The Wildcats were awarded the penalty kick and Gassman put it in the back of the net with ease.

"It was definitely a back-and-forth game, and Turner had about 55 percent possession that game," Bovaird said. "I was a little surprised to see that stat after the game, because I felt like we did well possessing the ball. Regardless, we out-shot them and had some nice strings of passes. I wasn't worried if we had to go into overtime. We've been there several times this year, and I think our fitness is pretty good for this point in the season."



The Louisburg seniors were honored Monday on Senior Night. Pictured are (front row, from let) Dagon Klugman, Gavin York, Ayden Deterding, Kaven Bartlett, Cade Gassman, Toby Espina-Roca, Owen Barber, Colin McManigal, manager Tehya Harvey; (back row, from left) Andrew Brown, Brock Varns, Jackson Olson, Caden French, Jordan Brown, Matthew Sword and Brecon Klugman.

Louisburg outshot Turner 12-11 and had four shots on goal. Gavin York, Toby Espina-Roca, Gassman and Colin McManigal each put shots on target.

Defensively, the back line of Ayden Deterding, Matthew Sword, York, Owen Barber, Caden French and Kaven Bartlett held strong, while senior goalie Brecon Klugman recorded six saves.

As good of a win this was for the Wildcats, Bovaird liked what he saw from his players throughout the contest.



Andrew Brown puts a shot on goal Monday against Turner.

“Before the game, I gave them a challenge – let’s get the ball in the corner and send across some crosses,” Bovaird said. “We had a team objective of getting at least 10 crosses in the attacking third, and we ended up with almost that many by the end of the first half. Although we didn’t get any goals off those crosses, it was great to see them respond to a challenge like that.

“What I really like is that they’re keeping things in perspective. We’re working on a style of soccer that will keep us in the game later in the post-season and give us a chance at moving on in regionals. It’s not about doing what it takes to win right now; it’s about improving on what’s important so we are ready to peak when it matters. The Turner game was a

positive example of that mindset for us.”

Wildcats shutout Paola to win second in a row

It may not have been the prettiest victory for Louisburg, but at this point in the season, a win is all that matters.

The Wildcats recorded their second straight shutout as they blanked Paola, 1-0, on the road Tuesday to improve their record to 6-5-2 on the season. Louisburg outshot Paola 28-3 in the contest, but had a tough time finding the back of the net.

“While there were a lot of frustrating things about the Paola game, I’m still pleased with the quality of soccer we played,” Bovaird said. “We dominated the field with over 60 percent possession during the game, and that’s good considering how much of a factor the wind ended up being. We limited Paola to just three shots on the night, and none of them were on target. Aside from the score being just 1-0, we played some good soccer against them.”



Louisburg's Jackson Olson clears the ball Monday at home against Turner.

Senior Colin McManigal provided the Wildcats with their lone goal as he broke open a scoreless game in the second half with a goal on an assist from sophomore Emmett White.

Jackson Olson, Toby-Espina Roca and McManigal all had two shots on target, while White, Andrew Brown and Jordan Brown also had a shot on goal.

Louisburg is back in action today when it travels for a match with Topeka High at Hummer Park.

Week 6 Athlete of the Week:

Colin McManigal



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week six of the fall sports season, sponsored by IronHorse Family and Cosmetic Dentistry.

COLIN MCMANIGAL, SENIOR, SOCCER

Louisburg senior Colin McManigal helped give the Wildcat boys soccer team the lift it had been looking for last week against Spring Hill. Louisburg, which lost to Spring Hill 6-2 earlier in the season, upset the Broncos, 2-1, and handed them their first Frontier League loss. McManigal was a big part of that as he scored the game-winning goal in the second half to help knock off the No. 7-ranked team in Class 5A.

On the season, McManigal has led Louisburg in scoring from his forward spot as he has nine goals on the year and has helped the Wildcats to a 6-5-2 record.

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday morning during the fall season and the winner is selected by Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.

Previous winners:

Week 1: Layne Ryals

Week 2: Nathan Vincent

Week 3: Emma Vohs

Week 4: Claire Brown

Week 5: Ashton Moore



The collage features several elements: the Ironhorse Family & Cosmetic Dentistry logo with a horse head icon; a QR code; a photo of a family smiling; a close-up of a person's teeth with braces; and text describing dental services. At the bottom, two addresses and phone numbers are listed.

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Wildcats pull upset of Spring Hill, get revenge win over Broncos



Louisburg senior Colin McManigal celebrates his goal Tuesday with teammates Jackson Olson (6) and Emmett White. The Wildcats earned the win at home over Spring Hill, 2-1.

Tuesday's home contest against Spring Hill seemed like a giant hill to climb for the Louisburg boys soccer team.

Earlier in the season, the Wildcats lost by four goals to Spring Hill and struggled to stay with the Broncos. It was a mismatch of a game.

On Tuesday, however, everything changed.

Louisburg handed Spring Hill its first loss in the Frontier League and got the big win it was hoping for as the Wildcats downed the Broncos, 2-1, at the Wildcat Soccer Complex.

For a team that has been struggling to find its identity, it was the signature win the Wildcats were looking for.

“For us, that was a huge win,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “We’ve definitely gotten some things figured out in the past two weeks, and I credit the players for that. They’re a focused group of athletes who not only believe in themselves, but they also believe in the process. They trust their coaching staff and they study their film from previous games. It’s an awesome statement to be able to turn around and play so much better against a team that had pretty much thumped us the previous game.

“The tone of this game compared to the last one was totally different. In the first game, Spring Hill scored a goal within the first 10 seconds. In the second game, we nearly scored a goal in the opening seconds. That set the tone for the game. We took it to Spring Hill from the beginning, and even in the final moments of the game when we were hanging onto our lead, we were still looking to go at them and remain on the offensive.”

The Wildcats (4-4-2) brought in a new sense of confidence with a lineup change. They moved Gavin York from forward to defender, and put senior Jackson Olson at midfield and sophomore Emmett White at forward.



Louisburg senior Gavin York clears a ball out of the back Tuesday against Spring Hill.

Moving pieces around seemed to pay off for the Wildcats as the defense of York, Matthew Sword, Ayden Deterding, Owen Barber and Caden French limited the Broncos' dangerous chances to just five shots on target. Spring Hill had 22 shots for the game.

"Gavin has been playing up top for us, but when we considered our team's needs on the back line, along with some feedback from Gavin, the decision was made to slide him back, adjust Emmett up to forward, and swing Jackson to outside mid to see how that solidified things for us," Bovaird said. "We tried it out against Baldwin, and then played like that at practice throughout the week and we realized that this was not only a solid change, but it may have been the key to getting us to where we want to be to reach out postseason goals.

"Matthew and Gavin, along with Owen, Ayden, Caden, and Kaven Bartlett, have been growing together so well as a defensive group. Throw in the athleticism of Brecon Klugman in goal, and I'm feeling pretty confident with what we're doing back

there.”



Louisburg goalie Brecon Klugman makes a diving save in the first half of Tuesday's match with Spring Hill.

Klugman had his best game of the season for the Wildcats as he turned away several Spring Hill (8-3) shots. He recorded four saves, blocked seven shots and allowed just the one goal.

“Brecon came out for high school soccer for the first time last season, and even then he split time as JV goalie with a few other players the whole season,” Bovaird said. “Over the summer and through the first part of the season, he’s really made huge strides. It helps having some veteran players with goalkeeper experience in the back to help guide him during games (Sword and Olson). Brecon is starting to figure out a lot of things with the position, and he’s developing his own style to go along with his confidence.”

Spring Hill opened the contest with a goal in the 18th minute to take the early lead, but the Wildcats still put pressure on the Bronco defense. It eventually worked as senior Toby Espina-Roca chipped a shot over the Bronco goalie from about

25 yards away to tie the match.

Espina-Roca and senior Cade Gassman worked a lot in the middle of the field to help the Wildcat get opportunities as both players played most of the match.

“Toby and Cade really paired up well in that game,” Bovaird said. “Cade Gassman is our center forward, but for a lot of the games, he’s been dropping back as a ‘false 9,’ and he and Toby are collaborating in the middle both defensively and offensively. Just watch how Toby and Cade play together – they’re like a couple of bulldogs out there. They cover so much of the field, and their fitness is outstanding so they’re able to play so much of the game. They are vocal leaders on the field, and especially with Toby’s goal, they get the rest of the team inspired and motivated to keep battling.”

With the game still tied at 1 at halftime, the Wildcats struck early in the second half as Olson sent a header down the line and senior Colin McManigal raced to get it. McManigal beat the Bronco keeper on a breakaway for the 2-1 advantage.



Louisburg sophomore Emmett White goes up for a header Tuesday against Spring Hill.

Spring Hill had a few more opportunities, including a shot that hit off the crossbar with 16 minutes left in the match, and then Klugman turned away two more chances with eight minutes remaining.

Louisburg will try and build off its biggest win of the season tonight as the Wildcats travel to Eudora for another Frontier League match. Varsity will begin at approximately 6 p.m.

The Cardinals are just 2-6-2 on the season, but have played a tough schedule, just like Louisburg. Bovaird is anticipating another tough challenge.

“Tonight’s game is a test of our character and our culture,” he said. “We’ve shown that not only can we beat a team that’s beaten us previously, but we can also compete with the best

teams in the state. Eudora has become an established program with a respectable coaching staff.

“They can beat good teams and they’re not afraid to step onto the field against the best teams in the Kansas City area. That strong schedule makes them dangerous, but we’re in the same boat. It’ll be a dogfight tonight, but I think this game will show the rest of the league, the region, and the state what we’re capable of.”

Louisburg ties Baldwin in Wildcats’ third overtime match of season



Louisburg senior Cade Gassman weaves through the midfield Thursday against Baldwin in Louisburg. The Wildcats and Bulldogs tied, 1-1.

The Louisburg boys soccer team has found itself in its fair share of overtimes matches this season, and it happened again Thursday.

Louisburg hosted Baldwin in a Frontier League matchup, and for the third time this season, found itself in a double overtime match. As for the result, the Wildcats had their second tie of the season in a 1-1 draw with the Bulldogs.

The Wildcats are now 3-4-2 on the season, but they hope all this extra time on the pitch will be beneficial at the end of the season.

“We’re still keeping sight of the bigger picture – the whole season,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Overtime games are helpful for us in the long run because it means we’re having to battle extra hard, not only during regulation time, but also in those extra minutes of overtime. Our long-term goals include accomplishments in the post season, and we have to be able to play hard the whole game.

“Having three overtime games means we’re getting ready for those games. Win, lose, or tie, I’m trying to get the guys to recognize the fact that we’re staying competitive. Against Baldwin, I think we showed that we’re continuing to improve and build from our previous games.”

Baldwin opened the scoring early in the first half as Caleb Carr put the Bulldogs up 1-0 six minutes into the match and took that lead into halftime.

The Wildcats made a switch in the lineup as well as senior Gavin York moved from forward to outside back. Bovaird then pulled up senior Jackson Olson from outside back to outside mid and moved sophomore Emmett White to forward.

“Gavin has played left back for his club team, and it’s something I’ve been considering for a while this season,” Bovaird said. “He’s comfortable in the back, and with that comfort comes a great deal of confidence. He’s got the second most goals for the team this season, and he’s tough as nails on defense, so it’s a risky trade-off. I think we’ve got some younger guys like Emmett White who can step up and get some goals, and Gavin is providing some excellent leadership in back.”



Louisburg senior Brock Varns sends a pass through the air Thursday against Baldwin.

The Wildcats kept attacking and tied the match up with 28 minutes remaining in regulation.

Louisburg senior defender Matthew Sword had a free kick from midfield and sent the ball into the box. The pass went off a Baldwin defender and into the goal to even the score.

“I don’t think we could have asked Matthew to have a better free kick than the one that went in off the Baldwin player’s head to even up the score,” Bovaird said. “We had more possession in that game, and I love how the guys responded to the physicality of the game. While it was one of those games where it could have gone either way on any given night, the guys showed a ton of heart with how they played.”

Several Wildcats got shots off on the night as White had three shots on goal to lead the way. Senior Toby Espina-Roca had two shots on target.

York, Andrew Brown, Cade Gassman, Colin McManigal and Matthew Sword also had a shot on goal.

Senior goalie Brecon Klugman allowed just the one goal and had 10 saves on the night, including two in the overtime period.

Louisburg will try and bounce back today as the Wildcats host Spring Hill. The match is set to begin at 6 p.m.