

Wildcats get back on winning track in shutout of Paola



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

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

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

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

"We've been itching to get back into the win column since we lost to Ottawa and then Tonganoxie," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "It's been rough this season taking so many losses, but when you look at it, there were many winnable games that could have gone our way if a few things had gone differently. We just needed to get that confidence boost, and

doing so against our rival Paola was a nice touch.

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



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

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

Louisburg picked up the scoring in the second half as White added two goals, including one that was assisted by Cuevas.

Freshman Brody Bovaird scored his first varsity goal, while Cuevas also added another to give himself two scores in the contest.

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

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

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

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



Dan Minster heads the ball away Tuesday against Paola.

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

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

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

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

Wildcats record second straight shutout in win over Chanute



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Will Showalter, Dan Minster and Cole Clover.

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

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

Week 4 Athlete of the Week: Emmett White



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

EMMETT WHITE, JUNIOR, SOCCER

Louisburg junior Emmett White has been the go-to-scorer for the Wildcat boys soccer team this season and White came through in a big way last Thursday in Louisburg's upset victory over Spring Hill. White converted a penalty kick in the second half to help the Wildcats to a 1-0 upset win over the Broncos at home.

On the season, the Louisburg forward has scored a team-high five goals to go along with 21 shots on the season. Earlier in the year, White scored two second half goals to give Louisburg a season-opening win over Leavenworth.

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: Declan Battle

Week 2: Megan Quinn

Week 3: Maddy Rhamy



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Penalty kick gives Wildcats upset victory over Spring Hill



Louisburg junior Emmett White celebrates with his teammates after converting a penalty kick Thursday at home against Spring Hill.

It had been a rough eight-game stretch for the Louisburg boys soccer team.

After winning their season opener, the Wildcats were in the midst of an eight-game losing streak when Spring Hill came to town Thursday.

The streak is no more.

Louisburg upset a Spring Hill squad, that is one of the top teams in the Frontier League, 1-0, as the Wildcats picked up their first league victory.

The Wildcats scored on a penalty kick early in the second

half. The match was then called with 27 minutes remaining in regulation due to inclement weather.

“Getting the win was a huge boost for the guys – one that we really needed,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “LHS soccer hasn’t experienced something a streak like that for a long time, and this program is accustomed to winning games. This year, the mindset has been that while we may run into teams with more talent and experience, we’re not going to let anyone out-hustle us. No one plays with greater heart than we do, and that’s what it took to pull off the win against Spring Hill. That, and a little help from Mother Nature.”

The match was scoreless at halftime, but the Wildcats got on the board just minutes into the second half.

Junior forward Jose Cuevas was fouled in the box and Louisburg was awarded a penalty kick. Junior Emmett White took the chance and found the back of the net to give the Wildcats the lead.

“Emmett has been a great leader with his work ethic and energy,” Bovaird said. “He’s a silent leader in a lot of ways, but when he scores a goal, you get to see a lot of emotion come out with him. That PK was a big confidence booster, not just for him, but for the rest of the guys as well.

“We came into the second half knowing that there was bad weather looming on the horizon and that Spring Hill had probably just gotten ripped by their coach. We knew that time was not on our side and that we needed to be ready for them to come at us hard. Jose got a great opportunity to take the ball to goal, he got fouled inside the box, and we were able to have Emmett put it away.”



Forward Jose Cuevas tries to settle a ball Thursday against Spring Hill.

The match ensued for another five minutes before lightning in the area delayed the match. It was eventually called as one half of completed action is enough for an official game.

However, Spring Hill nearly had a goal early in the first half. The Broncos found the back of the net in the 12th minute, but the goal was disallowed as the Broncos were called for interference with the goalie.

Louisburg goalie Evan Moreland had a busy game with five saves to go along with four blocked shots to earn the clean sheet. One of those saves was just a minute before the match was called as Moreland stopped a shot right before the ball was about to cross the line.

The Wildcat defense of Ethan Sharp, Dan Minster, Will Showalter, Cole Clover and Mika McKitrick tried to hold off the Bronco attack as long as they could.

Spring Hill controlled possession for much of the match and took 21 shots and had six corner kicks during the 53 minutes of action. Still, the Wildcats did enough to get their second win of the season.

The Wildcats (2-8) will try for back-to-back wins Tuesday when they travel to Chanute. The match is slated to begin at 6 p.m.

Louisburg falls to Baldwin

Last Tuesday, Louisburg traveled to another one of the Frontier League's top teams in Baldwin.

The Bulldogs handed Louisburg a 8-1 loss at Baldwin High School after they scored five first half goals.

Louisburg got its lone score in the first half when freshman Fletcher Viterna found the back of the net for his first varsity goal.

Wildcats see improvement despite losses to Eudora, Topeka High



Louisburg forward Owen Marsh works for an opening during a match earlier this season.

Ever since its win in the season opener, the Louisburg boys soccer team has faced its fair share of obstacles and tough breaks.

The Wildcats have played overtime matches, suffered other close losses and have gone up against bigger schools and programs. They have also had to deal with their fair share of injuries.

Louisburg just finished up a six-game stretch in 11 days that saw the Wildcats have to fight through those bumps and bruises. It ended this past week with a pair of losses to Eudora and Topeka High.

On Thursday, the Wildcats lost a tough 1-0 match to Eudora, before falling 4-0 on Saturday on the road against Topeka. Louisburg has lost its last seven matches, but for a roster filled with young, inexperienced players, they are battling to the end.

"The Eudora and Topeka games mark the end of a gauntlet that we've been running these past two weeks," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "I mean, six games in 11 days is pretty tough for any team, let alone team as young as we are."

"Our schedule can be pretty brutal, but our goal is to prepare our guys for each game so that they play their best, regardless of the size of our opponents' schools."

Against Eudora, the Cardinals scored the game's lone goal midway through the first half on a cross into the box.

The Wildcats had their fair share of opportunities as they took 12 shots on the night, including three from Emmett White. Owen Marsh and Colton Blue also had shots on target.

Louisburg goalie Evan Moreland helped keep the game close with six saves and two blocked shots.

"We went head-to-head with Eudora, a team with quite a bit of returning experience and leadership," Bovaird said. "They've had some tough losses this season, and I'm very proud with how we battled."

On Saturday against Topeka, the Wildcats squared off with the Class 6A team and the Trojans put the pressure on the Wildcats from the start.

Topeka scored two first half goals and took 43 shots on the day, including 19 on target. Moreland was busy in the net with 15 saves, including eight blocked shots.

"Topeka is a very talented 6A team, and they put a lot of speed and power on the field," Bovaird said. "That team is a shooting team, that's for sure. We held our own with them the second half of the game and limited their shots from outside as much as we could."

Louisburg will have another tough week ahead of itself as it will square off with two of the Frontier League's top teams in Baldwin and Spring Hill. The Wildcats travel to Baldwin today for a league match.

As tough as the schedule is, Bovaird sees his young team improving each time out.

“Each game sees a marked improvement from our guys,” he said. “It’s not evident from the scoreboard or the stat sheets, but you can see growth and development happening all over the field. We’re young, but no one is going to out-work us this season.”

Busy week leads to pair of losses, injuries for Wildcats



Louisburg’s Caleb Feldkamp pushes the ball up the field during a home match last week. The Wildcats fell to Bonner Springs in overtime on Thursday.

The Louisburg boys soccer team just finished up a stretch of three matches in four days – quite the haul for a team with just two returning starters from a year ago.

After losing the first of those three against Pittsburg last Wednesday, the Wildcats hosted Bonner Springs the very next day in hopes of getting back on track. Unfortunately, the Wildcats fell short following a 2-1 loss in the second

overtime.

The hardships continued Saturday when the Wildcats made the trip to Kansas City to face off with Harmon and lost 10-0 to the Class 6A school.

It definitely took its toll on the Wildcats as they suffered several injuries during that span, including losing starting forward John Powls for the season with a knee injury.

“Three games in four days is tough, and this week, we’re looking at three more games in five days,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “The athletes’ bodies need recovery time, but this year we were constrained with scheduling conflicts as we rebuild our competition schedule. We’re getting dinged up pretty good, and there are some bugs floating around. The kids just get back in school, and I don’t think their immune systems are strong enough to battle some of the bugs and sicknesses.

“In a perfect world, we would be able to play the appropriate level teams and have the appropriate amount of rest in between games. Hopefully, the guys were able to take Sunday off and let their bodies rest.”

Against Bonner Springs, the Wildcats jumped out in front late in the first half when Powls scored the opening goal on an assist from Colton Blue. Powls’ shot was from just outside the box that found the corner of the net.

Bonner Springs answered with a goal of its own right before halftime to tie it at 1-all. The game then went to double overtime, and it was there the Braves scored with 50 seconds left on a Louisburg own goal to hand the Wildcats the setback.

“The Bonner game was a heart-breaker,” Bovaird said. “To go the distance of a full game and almost all the way through both overtimes, and then to have the game-winning-goal scored with less than a minute left was devastating for the guys.

Before the game started, we talked about the key to the game being a mindset of bouncing back. I told the guys to keep a tight hold on their confidence and to trust in the process.

“The Pittsburg game was a victory for us everywhere except for on the scoreboard, so we needed to bring that same confidence against Bonner. I really felt we did just that. Things happened beyond our control, however. We had two starters go out with serious injuries and you could tell that a few of our other starters were battling some nagging injuries and sickness.”

The Wildcats (1-4) had their chances in the match as Powls and Blue each had two shots on target, while Emmett White and Caleb Feldkamp each had one.

Sophomore keeper Evan Moreland was busy guarding the net with seven saves and five blocked shots in the match, including three saves in the two overtimes.

Against Harmon, the Wildcats were playing catchup from the opening whistle as Harmon scored six goals in the first half and ended the game with four more in the second.

“After the Harmon game, I told the guys that this was a new experience for me,” Bovaird said. “I’ve never been on the other end of a game being called due to the mercy rule. It’s humbling, that’s for sure, and I can only imagine how they were feeling. But that’s life, you know? You can’t go through life taking the easy path, and you can’t build a program by scheduling competitions against lesser opponents. You have to be willing to step out there and scrap with the big dogs sometimes, and sometimes you’re gonna get your tail kicked. It hurts and it’s so hard on your pride, but at the end of the day, it’s just a high school sport.

“I told the guys that they’ll go home and get some rest, and they’ll wake up the next morning and their parents and families will still love them and be proud of them. We’ll get

back on the field Monday after school and get ready for the next challenge. Harmon was an incredibly disciplined team on the field. They moved with precision, they passed and moved off the ball better than any team we've seen this season or last season, they were patient with their tackles, and they kept their shape and listened to their coach very well."

Louisburg will try and rebound Tuesday when the Wildcats travel to Lansing. Varsity is slated to begin at 6 p.m.

Wildcats suffer back-to-back losses to Pittsburg, Independence



Louisburg midfielder Colton Blue pushes the ball up the field Wednesday during the Wildcats' home match against Pittsburg.

For 78 of the 80 minutes, Louisburg did exactly what it wanted to do against Independence.

It was the other two minutes that haunted the Wildcats afterward.

Pittsburg scored in the opening minute, and then again in the final minute, to hand Louisburg a 2-0 setback Wednesday in Louisburg.

The Wildcats controlled 60 percent of the possession and outshot the Dragons, but it wasn't enough as the Wildcats suffered their second straight loss.

"We played 78 minutes of solid soccer, but it was the opening minute and the closing minute when they got some great chances to capitalize on our mistakes," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "I feel frustrated, not because of how we played, but I feel frustrated for the guys. That was definitely a game we could have won."

Despite getting down 1-0 early on in the match, that didn't faze the Wildcats as they would go on outshoot the Dragons 24-9 the rest of the way.

Louisburg (1-2) nearly tied it up later in the first half when junior Emmett White hit a shot off the crossbar and went straight down, just missing the line.

The Wildcats survived a scare of their own in the second half when Pittsburg was awarded a penalty kick, but could convert as it was knocked away by goalie Evan Moreland to keep the game within striking distance.



Louisburg defender Cole Clover heads the ball out of the back Wednesday against Pittsburg.

Junior Colton Blue led the Wildcats with nine shots on the night, including three shots on target. White finished with seven, while sophomore Owen Marsh had three.

Then with under a minute remaining, Pittsburg iced the match with its final goal to put it out of reach for Louisburg.

“On the stat sheet, there were so many great things for us,” Bovaird said. “We out-shot them 24-10, but we just couldn’t get many on target. Defensively, the guys are coming together and figuring things out. Offensively, we’re gradually making our attacks more and more dangerous.”

Louisburg will try and stop its two-game losing streak tonight as the Wildcats host Bonner Springs in a Frontier League matchup.

Louisburg loses on the road to Independence

INDEPENDENCE – After coming off a thrilling season-opening win against Leavenworth, Louisburg was hoping to make it two in a row last Thursday.

The Wildcats went on the road to square off with Independence, but couldn’t get that back-to-back victory as they fell 2–1 to the Bulldogs in what was a tightly-played contest.

Louisburg had some opportunities and had its fair share of possession, but couldn’t find the back of the net until late in the contest.

“This season is going to be all about learning as we go,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Most of the team is earning their stripes for the first time on varsity. Against Independence, we had over 50 percent possession throughout the game, but we just couldn’t break through with our offense. They played a flat line in defense, and from the sideline they looked very vulnerable. We went down a goal early in the first half, despite controlling much of the game.

“The start of the second half, we were much smoother and more

confident. It got to be a very physical game, so we learned a few things about that style of soccer. The guys played well, but like I said, we've got a lot of growth and learning as we go through the season."

Independence scored a goal in each half to go up 2-0, before the Wildcats were awarded a penalty kick with three minutes left in the match. Junior Emmett White converted the PK, but the Wildcats could get no closer.

Junior Colton Blue led the Wildcats with four shots on the night and White had two. Sophomore Owen Marsh finished with one.

White's two goals rally Wildcats past Leavenworth in opener



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

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

The Wildcats led the Pioneers by a goal midway through the second half, and then the match became a fireworks show.

Leavenworth scored twice to take the lead and turned the game on its head.

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

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

"That's what the game is all about – overcoming adversity," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Starting off the year with a win was a major stepping stone for us. A lot of the guys were feeling nervous since it was the first varsity time many of them have played. Combine that with the natural jitters that athletes feel for their first game of the season, and it can be an emotional ringer that they go through. I'm proud of how they played, holding onto the lead for most of the game, and then coming back after conceding two goals."

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

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

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



Louisburg senior John Powls heads the ball away in the box Tuesday at home against Leavenworth.

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

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

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

In between that time, the Wildcats had opportunities to

increase their lead as White had a potential goal that was taken away due to an offside call.

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

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

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



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

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

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

"All last year, we knew that there were 15 of our teammates who wouldn't be coming back. This year's squad is full of guys who truly believe they can step up and represent LHS on the field. Monday's game wasn't the prettiest, and we witnessed some major things we need to work on fixing, but that's the easy part. These guys have already made the commitment to giving it all they've got."

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

Wildcat soccer features young roster for 2023 season



Louisburg junior Emmett White is one of two returning starters for the Wildcats this season. White was named a team captain

along with fellow juniors Colton Blue and Will Showalter.

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

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

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

It is quite the role reversal for the Wildcats as they enter this season with just two returning starters. Still, head coach Bobby Bovaird believes the future is bright for his young squad.

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

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

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

“Emmett, Will and Colton have grown and matured quite a bit in the past year,” Bovaird said. “Emmett and Colton are our two

returning starters, and that will be invaluable experience for them as they step into their leadership roles. Will has been very active in the summer months with encouraging his teammates, leading through drills and games, and being a vocal leader. I'm excited to see these three as captains this year."



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

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

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

"Most of our team will be seeing their first varsity time this

season," Bovaird said. "They've had some great leaders come before them, but I believe that this year's team will get things figured out. Their lack of varsity experience won't be holding them back. All summer and for the start of the season, we've been working on a possession style of soccer. The idea is to move off the ball, make runs to space, and let the ball do the work.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Going into the (last) weekend, I felt pretty good about everything, and then we got hit with the extreme heat,” Bovaird said. “This week has been full of uncertainty and the guys have done a great job being flexible. We made things work Monday with some indoor conditioning in the morning and a short skills practice in the gym in the evening. We’ve had full practices the past three mornings on the turf, but we’ve had to share with the football team.

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

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

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

Wildcat fall teams underway with successful first week of practice



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Harding kept his players busy over the summer to help prep

them for the season. The Wildcats took part in several scrimmages, 7-on-7 and skill sessions, to go along with their normal team camp and weights.

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

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



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

The Louisburg volleyball program is coming off another state

tournament run that saw the Wildcats finish fourth at the Class 4A tourney. That success brought a lot of interest as 39 players tried out, and 32 are currently rostered between the three teams.

“The first three days of the season with tryouts were pretty great,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “Everyone came with positive attitudes and high energy to push through the challenges of tryouts. After the team was finalized, we got to work right away on Thursday. The energy in the gym is great, and everyone is aware of the high expectations we have for ourselves heading into the season. Both the girls and the coaches are excited to be back in the gym getting better every day.”

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

going on the harder workouts earlier in the season.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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