

Wildcats shutout Lansing to complete busy week



Louisburg junior Gavin York gets on the ground to try and take the ball away from a Lansing player Monday at Lansing High School.

LANISING – It was the end of what was a grueling week for the Louisburg boys soccer team.

Monday's game at Lansing was the fourth game in seven days for the Wildcats – all of which were against Class 5A or 6A schools. The Wildcats finished the stretch with two wins, a tie and a loss.

One of those wins came against Lansing as the Wildcats took control of the game from the start, and thanks to two penalty kicks, were able to cruise to a 3-0 victory over the Lions.

"To be honest in those four games, not one of them were light and they were all physical," Conley said. "They are battles against bigger schools."

"I thought we held our own against Lansing. In the first half we kind of struggled with marks little bit, but once we sorted that out, we had the better of play the rest of the way."

The Wildcats got on the board early as senior Braden Yows scored on a penalty kick in the first half and they took that 1-0 lead into halftime.



Louisburg senior Braden Yows passes the ball toward the goal Monday against Lansing.

Yows once again put the pressure on the Lion defense as he dribbled into the box midway through the second half and was fouled. The Louisburg midfielder was injured on the play and didn't return.

Junior Cade Gassman converted the penalty kick and put the Wildcats up, 2-0. A few minutes later, junior Brock Varns scored his first varsity goal to put Louisburg up 3-0 and all but sealed the win.

"It really does help with confidence to be able to get two goals on penalty kicks, but I would rather take those away than have to take the hits we had to take," Conley said. "It just means that we were attacking. They came in strong with some big fouls and we capitalized on both."

Defensively, the Wildcat back line of Michael Seuferling, Matthew Sword, Toby Espina-Roca and Aidan Cannon held the Lions to just four shots. Junior goalie Mack Newell earned the clean sheet.

“Defensively we did great,” Conley said. “We didn’t give them anything dangerous. They may have had four or five shots, but none of them challenged us too much. We followed the game plan and the boys followed their assignments. We did a good job of staying tight with our marks and matching the physicality of the game.”



Junior Ayden Deterding wins the header during Monday’s match at Lansing.

In what was as tough week for the Wildcats, Conley was pleased with what he saw from his team against bigger programs.

“It is a ton of heart,” Conley said. “You are playing all big

schools against strong, physical dudes. I think our guys responded well and never made excuses. They kept battling. It was a heartbreaker against Gardner, and then to rebound against a physical Lansing team, was positive. They played for each other and that is all you can ask for.”

Louisburg loses league match to Spring Hill

Just a few days following its win over Lansing, Louisburg hosted Spring Hill in a Frontier League match that featured two of the top teams in the league.

Unfortunately for the Wildcats, it just wasn’t their night.

Spring Hill scored first on a penalty kick in the first 10 minutes of the match and then scored again on a cross late in the first half. Going up against another 5A program, the Wildcats fell, 3-1.

“Overall we struggled to execute,” Conley said. “We dominated the first nine minutes having two really good looks on goal, but then gave up a penalty kick. When they scored off of it, it was like the game was over. Our body language was poor and the boys just forgot our game plan and did not execute very well at all.

“We had three really good chances throughout the game with our player and their goalkeeper, but we were unable to even get a shot on goal. We did not execute the way we usually do and unfortunately it can back to bite us.”

The Wildcats scored right before halftime when a Braden Yows throw in found its way into the goal and cut the Bronco lead in half.

Chances were few and far between in the second half for Louisburg, and Spring Hill sealed a win with a goal in the final 10 minutes.

“We led every category, except the scoreboard,” Conley said.

"We just needed to play our game and we looked really flat after the penalty kick. Last night, we did not mark well in the back, the midfielders struggled to find feet with connecting passes and our forwards are not producing.

"To be completely honest, it was the worst game we have played in the last three years. This team is better than this and we will respond. We will be ready to play Monday."

Louisburg will try and get back on track Monday when it travels to Baldwin for a league match. Varsity will begin play at 4 p.m.

Win, lose or draw: Wildcats experience all emotions in 3-game week



Louisburg senior Braden Yows tries to break free from a Gardner-Edgerton defender to get the ball Saturday at Wildcat Stadium. The Wildcats fell in overtime, 2-1.

It was a win, lose or draw type of week for the Louisburg boys soccer team.

The Wildcats played their third game in five days Saturday when they hosted Gardner-Edgerton, and despite having a lead

at halftime, lost a dramatic 2-1 match in overtime.

Two days before that, Louisburg got a 4-2 win at Bonner Springs and on Tuesday, tied Basehor-Linwood 2-2 in a road contest at Basehor.

It was a week full of mixed emotions against three bigger programs as Gardner-Edgerton is a Class 6A school, while Bonner Springs and Basehor-Linwood are 5A.

“When you play three games in five days it is tough and when we were missing players for most of those games it makes it difficult, but that is not an excuse,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We just didn’t execute the way we needed to and ultimately that cost us. I felt the boys played with a massive amount of energy and heart. We did not back down to them nor were we intimidated by them or their physical play. The boys held their own and played well for the most part.”

The week ended in frustration as Gardner-Edgerton scored on a header three minutes into overtime Saturday at Wildcat Stadium to steal a win from Louisburg.



Louisburg junior Colin McManigal tries for a shot on goal Saturday against Gardner.

Louisburg got the scoring started early as the Wildcats scored in the first 10 minutes as Ethan Ptacek found the back of the net on an assist from Braden Yows.

The Wildcats (3-1-1) saw their lead slip away seven minutes into the second half as the Blazers tied it up and the match eventually went into overtime.

"We were prepared and ready to go," Conley said. "We started off really well and executed the game plan extremely well in the first half, but then struggled a little in the second half with our passing. Between our poor execution and the wind, it made it difficult to get out. I felt we played them fairly even. They may have had more possession when it was all said and done, but I felt we had more dangerous opportunities. We were focused and determined, but were unable to capitalize."

The Wildcat defense of Toby Espina-Roca, Matthew Sword, Michael Seuferling, Aidan Cannon and goalie Mack Newell also made things difficult on the Blazers

Louisburg didn't have many problems finding the back of the net against Bonner Springs on Thursday. Yows finished with a pair of goals and an assist, while Cade Gassman and Colin McManigal also added scores.



Defender Matthew Sword jumps in the air to try and settle a pass Saturday at Wildcat Stadium.

The Wildcats dominated possession and outshot the Braves 33-7 to get their third win of the season.

"I felt the boys did a great job of possessing and moving the ball," Conley said. "We created a lot of chances, but to be honest we struggled to finish. We were able to put a lot of pressure on them, but really struggled to finish the ball. I

think it was nice to get the win and the boys definitely earned it.

“It was also nice to get a lot of different guys in the game and try to rest some legs. Our defense was strong and did not give up many chances. Hats off to Bonner as their two goals were absolutely bombs.”

On the road against Basehor-Linwood last Tuesday, the Wildcats also got out to a good start.

Yows opened the scoring to give the Wildcats an early lead, but Basehor tied it up with 11 minutes left in the first half.



Louisburg midfielder Isaac Guetterman passes the ball up field Tuesday during the Wildcats' match at Basehor-Linwood.

The Wildcats took the lead back right before halftime as Yows assisted on the goal this time. He threw the ball in near the

goal and junior Gavin York got a head on it to put Louisburg up 2-1 at the break.

Late in the second half, Basehor-Linwood was awarded a controversial penalty kick, which allowed the Bobcats to tie the match. Neither team was able to score in the two overtimes and it ended in a draw.

“The game was incredibly physical,” Conley said. “The frustrating part was the lack of consistency and the boys struggled to find the flow of the game in that regard. I felt we created a lot of chances, and quite honest, either team could have won that game. The boys created a massive amount of chances, but just could not find the back of the net. We were missing several starters, but it was next man up. The boys stepped up and didn’t back down.”

Louisburg will compete in its fourth match in seven days today when it travels to Lansing. Varsity will begin at approximately 6 p.m.

Wildcats blister nets for 17 goals in wins over Pittsburg, Paola



Louisburg senior Hunter Rogers heads the ball for one of the

Wildcats' eight goals last Tuesday at home against Pittsburg.

The Louisburg boys soccer team has blistered the nets to start its season.

Louisburg opened its schedule last Tuesday at home against Pittsburg and then followed it up with a 9-0 road win Thursday at Paola.

In all, the Wildcats accounted for 17 goals in the two matches as they have cruised to a perfect start to their year.

It began with Pittsburg, and despite a taking a while to get going, the Wildcats peppered the net with eight goals and came away with an 8-0 victory over the Purple Dragons.

"As a coach you are always nervous if you have your team prepared, but I felt we did a really nice job of coming out ready to go from the start," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We were able to work on a few things throughout the game and we got better as the game went on. It was a nice performance for us and I thought the boys played really well.

"We need to work on our execution a little bit. We had 50-plus shots, but struggled to find the net. I do think Pittsburg did a nice job of getting bodies in front and blocking a lot of shots. Our build up was really nice and the boys did a nice job."

The Wildcats were scoreless in the first 20 minutes before the flood gates opened.

Junior Gavin York scored the season's first goal as he headed the ball off a corner kick, past the Pittsburg goalie to give the Wildcats the lead.

Colin McManigal followed it up with a goal off a rebound to double the advantage with nine minutes left in the first half.

Louisburg would get four goals in the final nine minutes as

junior Cade Gassman scored on back-to-back chances, then senior Braden Yows added another before halftime to make it 5-0.



Junior Cade Gassman jumps in the air to get a 50-50 ball last Tuesday against Pittsburg.

Yows opened the second half with his second goal of the match and senior Hunter Rogers followed with a goal off a header to make it 7-0. McManigal sealed the win as he found the back of the net on an assist from freshman Emmett White.

“It was nice to see everyone get involved,” Conley said. “We were playing really well and moving the ball well. The boys were on the same page and did a nice job of doing their jobs. We do have some things to clean up, but the boys played hard and came ready to go. We had five different goal scorers and different guys get assists. We did have a lot more

opportunities, but struggled to finish.”

Sophomore Austin Jamison led the Wildcats with two assists, while Yows and Gassman each had one as well.

The Wildcats had 51 shots on the night and dominated possession from the start.

Louisburg’s defense was able to turn away the eight Pittsburg shots and junior goalie Mack Newell earned the clean sheet.

Against Paola, the Wildcats were without Newell in goal, but Louisburg continued its hot start and controlled possession against Panthers.

The Wildcats scored five first half goals on their way to a 9-0 victory and had eight different players record goals.



Freshman Emmett White gets lifted in the air by Braden Yows

after scoring his first varsity goal Thursday at Paola.

Junior Ethan Ptacek had a big night as he finished with two goals and an assist. Yows had three assists to lead Louisburg, while Gassman and Toby Espina-Roca had two and one, respectively.

White, Yows, Jamison, McManigal, Rogers, York and Gassman also found the back of the net for Louisburg.

Junior goalie Jackson Olson got the clean sheet.

"I thought the boys played really well," Conley said. "It was great to see so many different people score goals and be involved. We eight different goal scorers and seven assists on those nine goals. We really worked hard and moved the ball. We dominated possession and the boys were able to work on a few things.

"I liked our speed of play and how well we moved the ball. It was nice to see the boys play for each other and really battle. It was also great to be able to play a lot of guys and get some experience. It was a great team win."

Louisburg's schedule will get a little tougher as the Wildcats have three games this week, including a pair of road matches against two Class 5A programs in Basehor-Linwood and Bonner Springs. They will end it with a rare Saturday afternoon match against Class 6A Gardner-Edgerton.

The Wildcats travel to Basehor-Linwood for a 6 p.m. start tonight.

Wildcats hoping to surpass last year's historic season



Louisburg goalie Mack Newell leaps for a save during the team's intrasquad scrimmage last Friday. Newell is one of three returning starters on the defense for the Wildcats.

Putting together the best season in program history is a pretty impressive feat.

The Louisburg boys soccer team did that last year as the Wildcats went on to finish third at the Class 4-1A state tournament. The Wildcats finished the year 16-2 as it was a season to remember.

As special as that season was for the players, they want more in 2021 and are settling for nothing less.

"We went to state last year, and we were one of the only two teams to finish the season with a win," senior captain Braden Yows said. "It was the best result in school history, but as a team we've set a goal to win state this year. We are working hard every day to achieve that goal. It's going to be a lot of fun this year."

Again, the Wildcats are considered one of the favorites to return to the state final four this season. Louisburg is currently ranked No. 3 in Class 4-1A by the Kansas High School Soccer Coaches Association going into the season, just behind Bishop Miege and Wichita-Trinity Academy.

Winning state is a tough goal to achieve, but it is one the Wildcats are looking forward to trying.

“Our boys are really focused on making another run to the state final four again,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We obviously we have a lot of work to do to accomplish that, but the boys want that again.

“Practices have gone well. We have had adversities like everyone else in regards to the heat, but the boys are working hard and are determined.”

Louisburg returns an experienced group from a year ago and could be a dangerous team to go up against on both sides of the field.



Louisburg senior captain Braden Yows heads the ball away during the team's scrimmage last week.

The Wildcats figure to be strong on the attacking side and it starts with Yows in the midfield. Yows, who was a first-team all-league and all-state player a year ago, broke the program record with 21 assists and also had seven goals.

Junior Cade Gassman also returns to the forward spot as he was second on the team with 13 goals a year ago and had eight assists. Gassman was also a first team all-league and all-state player.

Juniors Colin McManigal and Gavin York also return as goal scoring threats at the forward position as they try to replace the team's scoring leader from a year ago, Treston Carlson.

Juniors Ethan Ptacek, Andrew Brown, Brock Varns, sophomore Austin Jamison and freshmen Emmett White and Colton Blue will also see some time as outside midfielders. Senior Isaac Guetterman will also return as a starter in the midfield.

"We do have a lot of options," Conley said of his depth. "We lost a big part of that in Treston graduating last season. He is currently playing at Hesston College and scored his first collegiate goal in his first game. We are returning a lot of options, but we are looking to fill that void. This is be a really fun group to watch and see them grow throughout the season."

The Wildcats also return an experienced defense, starting with its outside backs. Senior Michael Seuferling and junior Toby Espina-Roca return to anchor the outside. Seuferling was a first-team all-state selection a year ago.

Mack Newell is also back in goal for his second consecutive year. The junior goalie had a strong season as a sophomore with second team all-league and all-state honors as he had 88 saves on the year.



Junior Toby Espina-Roca clears the ball out of the back last week during the team scrimmage.

Senior Hunter Rogers also returns to fortify the defense at his starting defensive midfield spot.

New to the defense will be junior Matthew Sword, who will inherit the center back spot as he will try to make the Wildcat defense even stronger.

“In the back, we are returning several key players, but made a position change for Matthew Sword,” Conley said. “Matthew was a great goalkeeper, but he will be moving to center back for us. He has done an excellent job of learning the position and is executing very well.

“Seuferling has been the best outside back I have seen over the past three years. He will be fun to watch as he finishes his high school career. Newell, in his second year ever playing soccer, will look to build on his record setting season from last year. It is amazing to look how far he has come over only a year of playing soccer. Espina-Roca has been an attacking outside back that helps our team keep pressure on

our opponents defensively.”

Louisburg features just a five-member senior class this season in Yows, Seuferling, Rogers, Guetterman and Aidan Cannon. Still, Conley knows they will all provide great leadership.

“Braden has been fantastic for our program and is a quality player who just verbally committed to UMKC,” Conley said. “He was also added to the list of Preseason All American watch list for Kansas. Hunter brings a massive amount of experience in our midfield. He has great vision and posses the ball really well. He is also great in the air. Isaac is another senior in the midfield for us. He works incredibly hard and has a massive work rate. He can cover a lot of ground and is exceptional at reading the play.

“Michael is the best outside back I have ever coached and has been the best outside back I have seen over the last two year of teams I scouted or we have played. He is a strong on the ball defender, reads the game well and is great in the air. Aidan Cannon has played multiple positions for us in our program. He is an athletic kid who is smart and is familiar with our defense. He will be an asset for us this season.”

The Wildcats open their season today when they host Pittsburg at Wildcat Stadium. They kickoff a difficult schedule that features contests against numerous Class 5A and 6A programs.

“Our schedule has seven 4A schools, seven 5A schools, and two 6A schools,” Conley said. “Our schedule is solid for a typical 4A school. We will have our work cut out for us. This team needs to be pushed and our schedule does just that. Our league one of the strongest leagues for 4A schools you will find.

“We have a lot of different styles of play within our league and have some really talented schools. Our schedule with our league opponents and our out of league competition will

prepare this team for the playoffs.”

Yows looking to make one final imprint on Wildcat program



Two years ago, Braden Yows made his way to Louisburg High School not knowing really what to expect.

Yows transferred at the beginning of his sophomore year hoping to make some new friends and play the sport he loves – soccer.

Now, as Yows begins his final year with the Wildcat program, it is a bittersweet time for the Louisburg senior as he looks on what he has achieved the last two years.

He helped lead the Wildcats to their best finish in program history and broke the program’s assist record in the process. Still, Yows is excited to see what he and the rest of his teammates can accomplish.

“It’s never easy to move during your high school years, but coach (Kyle) Conley and the upperclassmen at the time made the transition easy,” Yows said. “We have a great senior class. Michael (Seuferling), Isaac (Guetterman), Hunter (Rogers), Aidan (Cannon) and I are looking forward to continuing the

tradition of success that other senior classes have set for us.”

Yows moved that bar even higher last season as Louisburg finished third at the Class 4-1A state tournament. He was a fixture in the Wildcat midfield as he accounted for a team record 21 assists.

He was a first-team All-Frontier League and all-state selection, but even after all that, Yows wants more.



Senior Braden Yows broke the program assist record last season with 21.

“Braden and his teammates have one goal this season,” Conley said. “They are going to push themselves to reach that goal. Braden is extremely motivated because this is his last season and determined to keep making school history as a team.

“Last year, he told me he wanted our assist record, and he got it with 21 assists. This season he said he wants to win. I’m excited to see how rises to that goal. He is a fantastic players and is going to do great things in his playing

career.”

Yows’ senior season has hardly begun, but it is already off to a great start.

Earlier this month, Yows committed to play soccer at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and became the first Wildcat player to commit to a Division I program.

More honors later followed as he was also named to the 2021 High School All-American watch list and was one of 14 players named across the state of Kansas.

“I set a goal to play after high school, so I’m happy to have committed to a great program like UMKC to continue playing,” Yows said. “I was lucky to have great coaches to help guide me through the process. I’m also happy that I’ll get to continue my soccer career close to home. Now with my commitment set, I’m fully focused on the season – with my eyes set on a state title.”



Braden Yows (right) was all smiles after holding up the third place trophy last season. This year, Yows and the Wildcats are

chasing after a state title.

That state title is truly what the Wildcats are focused on for the 2021 season after falling to Bishop Miege in the state semifinals last season. Yows could care less about his accolades as long as the team accomplishes their goals.

“Braden is a young man who comes ready to go each and everyday,” Conley said. “He is a competitor and plays with a high motor. He leads by example, but does a fantastic job of teaching and uplifting his teammates! Best part is, he is coachable. He is always wanting to learn and be challenged.

“He is a special player. There is no doubt of his talents, but he worries more about his teammates than himself. One person won’t let our team reach our goals, he knows that and the team knows that. It’s going to take all 20 guys to put us in the position to achieve the team’s goals. He does play forward for his club team and for us he plays attacking midfielder. He will have some adjustment for our system, but he is very determined.”

Even though the Wildcats ended their season with a victory over Rose Hill to take third at state, there is one more thing Yows wants to accomplish.

“We went to state last year, and we were one of the only two teams to finish the season with a win. We finished third and had the best result in school history, but as a team we’ve set a goal to win state this year. We are working hard every day to achieve that goal. It’s going to be a lot of fun.”

OPINION: Wildcat success provides getaway from 'real world' problems



There hasn't been a whole lot of good to talk about in the last year or so.

Our life has changed around us. We are having to deal with a new normal and there are a lot uncertainties as to what our future holds.

It is an unnerving time for a lot of people and our country seems more divided than ever. Still, to get by in this difficult time, you have to look for positives.

For me, the last school year brought me some of the best moments in my journalistic life. The 2020-21 school was arguably one of the most successful seasons in Louisburg High School history from top to bottom, and I was more than grateful to be there for it all.



Just look at what was accomplished last year:

- Boys cross country qualified for state for the first time in school history.
- Girls cross country placed at state for the first time in its history as they took third in Class 4A. Maddy Rhamy, Lola Edwards and Reese Johnson also earned medals.
- Boys soccer had its best finish in school history with a 3rd place state finish.
- Boys basketball advanced to the state championship game for the first time and took second.
- Girls basketball advanced to the state tournament for the first time in 47 years and recorded its best finish in third.

- Wrestlers Alec Younggren and Cade Holtzen took second and third, respectively, at the state tournament.
- Boys golf qualified for state as a team.



- Girls soccer made an improbable run to advance to its fourth straight state final four and the Wildcats took fourth.
- Delaney Wright won three state track titles in the long jump, 200 dash and 400 dash and broke all three school records in the process.
- Maybe perhaps the best accomplishment of all, the Louisburg boys track and field team won the Class 4A state championship as they edged out Andale for the title.

Just a year removed from losing their spring season due to COVID-19, the Wildcats came back stronger than ever and it showed. It was an exciting time to be a Louisburg sports fan.

However, with so much positivity from last season, it is time to turn the page and focus on what the 21-22 season has in store.



First day of fall practice begins this Monday and the football, volleyball, cross country and boys soccer team all have a chance to do some special things this season. I am fortunate I will be able to be there once again to cover it all.

As I talked about earlier, there is a lot of negativity going on in the world right now, but I am more than thankful to have a job where I can get away from all that and cover all the special moments.

Last season was a much-needed get away for me and it was an unbelievable journey to see all the Wildcat history that was made.

This year has another chance to be a special one. There is no way to predict what will happen, but I do know there is a chance for even more history and records to fall this upcoming year.

Football numbers are up and the Wildcats are poised for a big season, while the cross country, volleyball and boys soccer team all return several key pieces to make a run in the postseason – and that is just what the fall will hold.

The seasons can't get here soon enough and I am ready to cover it all once again. Hope to see you all out there supporting the Wildcats and maybe you can forget all those stresses in life – even if it is just for a few moments.

2021 Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Year nominees



For the past five years, Louisburg Sports Zone has given out Athlete of the Week awards during each of the three sports seasons. I do it to recognize special athletic achievements and to highlight the athletes.

For the fourth straight year, Louisburg Sports Zone will be handing out an Athlete of the Year honor to a male and female athlete at Louisburg High School. I wanted the opportunity to recognize those who exemplify what it means to be an "athlete."

Although I am giving out the award, I wanted the process to be subjective, so I asked the head coaches at LHS to help me out. I asked each coach to send me nominations of who they thought exemplified the Athlete of the Year honor. They will then vote for their top 3 male and female athletes and then I will tabulate the results and determine the winner. The winner will be announced later this month.

Below are the nominees for this year's award in alphabetical order by last name. Congrats to all those who were nominated and best of luck!

ATHLETES OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

FEMALE



Reese Johnson – Junior – Cross Country, Soccer

Junior Reese Johnson made history in a couple different sports for Louisburg this past season.

In the fall, Johnson played a big role on the girls cross country team. The Lady Cats finished third in Class 4A, as that was the first time a team had placed at state in girls cross country. Johnson also medaled 15th individually and was one of three Lady Cats to earn state medals that day.

In the spring, Johnson was one of the leaders on the girls soccer team that advanced to the Class 4-1A state final four this past season. Johnson earned second team All-Frontier League honors after she finished the season with seven goals and nine assists as the Wildcats finished fourth at state.



Alyse Moore – Senior – Volleyball, Basketball, Track

Alyse Moore ended her senior season as one of the most accomplished athletes in Louisburg High School history. Moore is the first female athlete in school history to compete at the state level in four different sports, including both softball and track in the same season in 2019.

In the spring, Moore earned her second straight track state medal in the javelin as she finished fourth in the Class 4A meet. Earlier in the year, Moore broke a 20-year-old school record with a throw of 149 feet.

Moore was also a starter on the girls basketball team and helped the Lady Cats to their best finish in school history. Moore and the Lady Cats advanced to state for the first time in 47 years and took third overall. Individually, Moore eclipsed the 500-career rebound mark and was an honorable

mention all-league player. She led the team in rebounds with 8.6 boards a game and also averaged 7.3 points and 1.7 steals.

On the volleyball court, Moore started as an outside hitter for the Lady Cats and was second on the team with 174 kills and 195 digs.



Delaney Wright – Junior – Basketball, Track

Delaney Wright ended the 2020-21 school year with a bang as she became the school's first athlete to win three state championships in track in one season.

At the Class 4A state meet in Wichita last month, Wright won state titles in the long jump, 400-meter dash and 200-meter dash. She broke her own 200 and 400 school records to reach those accomplishments. On the season, Wright set new school

records in each of those events.

Wright was also a key player on the girls basketball team and helped the Lady Cats to their best finish in school history. Wright and the Lady Cats advanced to state for the first time in 47 years and took third overall at the Class 4A state tournament. Wright was one of the team's best defensive players as she averaged two deflections and a steal per game. She was also assigned to the team's best player.

MALE



Weston Guetterman – Senior – Football, Basketball

Weston Guetterman played big roles for both the Wildcat football and basketball teams this past season.

On the gridiron, Guetterman was the starting quarterback for

Louisburg, which finished 4-3 and tied for third in the Frontier League standings. Guetterman earned honorable mention All-League honors on defense for his play in the secondary. He finished the year with 32 tackles, two interceptions, three tackles for a loss and seven batted balls. He also finished with 548 yards rushing and six touchdowns.

Guetterman was one of the team leaders on the boys basketball team that advanced to its first state championship in school history and took second at the Class 4A state tournament. He was a second-team All-Frontier League selection from the point guard spot and averaged 12.5 points, 4.3 rebounds, 3.7 assists and 2.2 steals a game. He was also an all-state selection by the Topeka Capital-Journal, Wichita Eagle and Sports in Kansas.



Cade Holtzen – Senior – Cross Country, Wrestling, Track

Cade Holtzen was a three-sport athlete this past season for Louisburg and became the first male athlete (that is known) to participate in state competitions in all three sports, in the same season.

Holtzen helped the Wildcat cross country team to qualify for state for the first time in school history as they finished third at regionals. At state, Holtzen took 56th overall in 18 minutes and 46 seconds.

On the wrestling mat, Holtzen had a year to remember as he finished his career with a 155-19 record and a third-place state finish at 132 pounds. He was a four-time state qualifier for the Wildcats and a three-time state placer. Holtzen served as the team captain this past season and currently holds eight program records, including most season victories and most career wins. He was also chosen to participate in the 2021 Metro Classic.

In the spring, Holtzen earned his second state medal of the year as he helped the 4×800-meter relay team to a third place finish. He also helped the Wildcats to their second team Class 4A state track championship in school history.



Kolby Kattau – Junior – Football, Baseball

Kolby Kattau was a two-sport athlete this past season and had a good year for both the football and baseball program.

In the spring, Kattau helped the Wildcats to their first regional championship game since 2009 as he played both first base and pitcher. Kattau finished the year with a .444 average and racked up 32 hits for the Wildcats to go along with a .560 on-base percentage. He finished with five doubles, two triples, 16 RBIs, scored 26 runs and stole nine bases. He was a first team All-Frontier League selection and was an honorable mention all-state selection by the KBCA.

On the football field, Kattau played on both sides of the ball for a team that finished with a 4-3 record and tied for third in the Frontier League. He finished with two touchdowns from

the running back spot and had 41 tackles at linebacker.



Alec Younggren – Senior – Football, Wrestling

Alec Younggren was a two-sport athlete for Louisburg as he shined on the football field and on the wrestling mat.

Younggren, who missed part of the football season with an injury, still played well-enough on the offensive and defensive lines to earn All-Frontier League honors on both sides of the ball. Younggren was named as a first-team offensive lineman and an honorable mention lineman on defense.

He was a key fixture on the Wildcat offensive line that amassed more than 2,400 yards of total offense and 20 touchdowns. He also had 23 tackles on defense. Younggren was also an all-state honorable mention selection.

The Louisburg senior had an historic season in wrestling as he advanced to the 220-pound Class 4A championship match, where he finished runner-up. He finished the year with a 37-1 record and had Louisburg's highest state finish since 2012.



Braden Yows – Junior – Soccer

Louisburg junior Braden Yows was vital part of the Wildcats' best finish in school history this past season. Yows helped the Wildcats to a third place finish in the Class 4-1A state tournament.

Yows was a first-team All-Frontier League and all-state selection from his midfield spot. He broke a program record with 21 assists and also finished with seven goals on the year.

Carlson excited to play collegiate soccer at Hesston



Louisburg senior Treston Carlson recently signed his letter of intent to play soccer at Hesston College next season.

Treston Carlson has always loved the game of soccer.

He's played it since he was young, but Carlson wanted to take it a step further. When he was a freshman in high school, Carlson made a goal for himself to play soccer in college.

It all became a reality earlier this year. In front of family and friends at Louisburg High School, Carlson signed his letter of intent to play soccer at Hesston College.

"It means a lot to me to play college soccer," Carlson said. "I always talked to my dad about playing in college and it was a goal of mine. To achieve that goal that I wanted when I was a freshman means so much to me.

"I have always wanted to play college soccer, ever since I was little I knew I wanted to. I started playing soccer when I was four years old and my dad signed me up to play. I don't think he thought I would be good, but it was just something for me to do."

It turned out to be a great move as Carlson was one of the

top players in Class 4-1A this past season as he helped the Wildcats to their best finish in school history. Louisburg finished third at the state tournament this past fall, and Carlson was a big reason why.

Carlson led the Wildcats in goals scored with 16 and scored eight game-winning goals. He finished the year with 37 points.



Louisburg senior Treston Carlson recently signed his letter of intent to play soccer at Hesston College. Standing (from left) is Danielle Carlson, Alex Saad, Leah Carlson, David Carlson, Lucas Carlson, Denise Reed, John Reed and Michele Brown.

For his performance, he was named first team All-Frontier League and first team all-state in his final season with the Wildcats.

Carlson hopes to use all the momentum when he moves onto Hesston College in the fall.

“The coach and the team made the choice easier for me,” Carlson said. “They all seemed like good guys I could see myself playing soccer with everyday. It was a tough decision because there was another college that made it tough, but I knew I wanted to go to Hesston. It just seemed right for me.”

Carlson, who was a forward for the Wildcats, will play the same spot for Hesston. Carlson hopes that he can earn playing time as a freshman.

“The coach saw me playing as a forward and he said he liked me as a left winger,” Carlson said. “He thought I would fit in good with the other guys.

“I want to work hard for the team and be able to compete with them. I expect myself to train and want to get better everyday no matter what we’re doing.”

Top Louisburg Sports Stories of 2020



There hasn't been a year like 2020, and for most people, they are ready to put it behind them and forget it ever existed.

Still, with all the challenges that 2020 brought, there were still plenty of positives to talk about when it came to Louisburg High School sports. History-making state places and

state medals were plentiful on this list, but it wasn't all positive. Louisburg had to say goodbye to a beloved town figure and athletes had to deal with the loss of spring sports.

Below are the top stories from 2020, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the explanation is the link to the actual story from the event.

When putting the list together, I took a lot of things into account – whether it was team vs. individual, popularity of the sport, historical achievements and the interest it drew on the web site. Thanks to the cancellation of spring sports, I don't have the top 10 like I normally do, but I got close.

This year was a blast to cover, when I had the opportunity, anyway. Still, I am looking forward to what 2021 will bring. Thank you for everyone's support and can't wait for it all to begin again.



8. Ratliff-Becher wins state powerlifting title

After winning a state championship in 2019 Reilly Ratliff-Becher had every intention of backing up her performance during the Class 4A State Powerlifting Championships on March 7 at Piper High School.

In fact, the Louisburg senior wanted to improve it. Last

season, Ratliff-Becher took first in everything but squat, which she got runner-up.

This time around, she got the clean sweep.

Ratliff-Becher took first in bench, squat and clean and that led to her second straight state championship in the 180-pound class.

“It means a lot to me that I was able to win the state title again,” Ratliff-Becher said. “I set a goal for myself to win first in everything since I had got second in squat last year and I achieved it. Even though it wasn’t my best showing with the numbers I got on my lifts.

“The competition was very good this year, as it always is. But, fortunately with all the work I put in to at least maintain my numbers from last year, meant I was able to lift bigger amounts than my competition.”



7. Conley named state and midwest coach of the year

After a third place finish to end the year, Louisburg boys

soccer coach Kyle Conley was recognized among the state's best.

Conley was named as the Class 4-1A Coach of the Year by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association in November.

He guided the Wildcats to a 16-2 record on the season and the team's highest finish in program history when Louisburg ousted Rose Hill, 3-0, in the state third-place game.

Just a few weeks later, Conley was honored once again – this time on the girls' side.

Despite the lost season, the United Soccer Coaches wanted to recognize coaches for their past accomplishments and for what this past spring was supposed to hold.

Atop that list was Conley as he was named as the Small School Midwest Coach of the Year.

"I am absolutely honored to receive this award," Conley said. "There are so many great coaches in the Midwest, but to me this is a program award. None of this is possible without everyone involved; girls coming to work their tails off everyday, parents traveling and supporting us anywhere and everywhere, community helping with supporting the program, the school supporting the girls, etc. Without the support and buy in from the girls, parents and community none of this is possible."

The Wildcat girls program has had a successful start in its four years. Conley has a 54-22-2 record during that span, that included two state runner-ups and another state final four appearance.



6. Louisburg cheer places third at state

The Louisburg cheer squad had to do its postseason competition a little different this year thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It didn't seem to bother them much as the defending state champions found themselves right in the thick of things again.

Although they didn't repeat as champs, they were still among the state's best as the Wildcats cheerleaders finished third in the state back in November.

Unlike performing in front of judges like they did in 2019, the Wildcats had to video tape their performance and send it in to be judged. It fared well as they tallied 83.35 points to finish in the top 3.

Baldwin earned the state title with 88.85 points and Abilene was second with 85.25.

Members of the Louisburg cheer squad are Bella Feikert, Addison Drake, Brooklyn Harmon, Jayden Trester, Maddy Carpenter-Ross, Sophie Katzer, Sammy McDaniel, Julia Arriola, Andrea Gaza, JoJo Hendrickson, Sydney Dudzik, Abby Bradley, Anna Poe, Sienna Finch, Mable Graham, Audrey Anderson, Zoe Weers, Anna Morrison and Maggie Madison



5. Holtzen, Owens earn state medals for Wildcat wrestling

Ryan Owens and Cade Holtzen both had their own agendas going into the state wrestling tournament.

Owens, qualified for state last year, but left without a win and he vowed to fix that this time around. As for Holtzen, he came up short in his efforts for a second state medal as a

sophomore last season and had all the motivation not to come home empty-handed again.

Both wrestlers more than made up for their rough patches a year ago.

Owens and Holtzen left Salina with a state medal during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships on Friday and Saturday at the Tony's Pizza Events Center.



Owens made it to the semifinals and wound up earning a fourth-place medal at 120 pounds, while Holtzen finished fifth at 126 pounds.

It also marked the first time since 2016 that Louisburg finished the season with multiple state medalists, when Nathan Keegan and Mason Koechner each brought home medals.

The Wildcats nearly had three medalists as sophomore Brandon Doles finished one win shy of a state medal at 160 pounds with a 2-2 record.



4. Dennis steps down as LHS team doctor

Almost every day of the week, if you were looking for Damon Dennis, he could be found at his office on 11 S. Broadway St., helping treat those pesky aches and pains, taking X-rays, or mending those beaten up athletes after a game.

Doc D – as he is affectionately known – opened Louisburg Chiropractic Office 28 years ago and has served as the

Louisburg High School athletic team doctor for almost that same amount of time.

Dennis has seen it all. The walls in his office are lined with mementos from his years of service to both the community and the high school.

He has taped thousands of ankles, seen even more patients and has touched many lives during his time in Louisburg. That is why this week is one of the more emotional times in his life.

In May, he left Louisburg Chiropractic Office and handed the reins over to Dr. Jake Polzin. Add to that, Dennis also stepped away as LHS' team doctor and left an absence on the sidelines and behind the mic that many in Louisburg have come to know.

"My decision to step down and sell the practice has turned out to be the hardest thing I have ever done," Dennis said. "I have poured everything I have into my job and community. It has become my entire existence. I was taught from a young age to serve others and your community. I feel like the pressures I have put on myself have become unhealthy. I have put about 40 years work in to 28 and feel like there is never going to be a good time to make such a huge life change.

"That being said, I feel like I need to make changes while I am still able to do the things that will be best for my family. Dr. Polzin came along and I think he will carry on the work at the office wonderfully. We are a lot alike in many ways. I could not have found anyone better to replace me."

For many, Dennis has been a big part of people's lives, especially in the athletic arena. He has served as the LHS team doctor since 1992 and has treated many athletes in those 28 years.



3. Girls Cross Country Takes Third at State

For 23 years, the Louisburg cross country program has been chasing a top three finish at the Class 4A meet.

The Wildcats have had several teams qualify, especially in the last few seasons, but have always come up short of their goal. Following Saturday's race in Wamego, the Wildcats can finally stop running after it.

The Louisburg girls put together an historic performance at the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships at Wamego Country Club. The Lady Cats earned a state plaque with a third place finish as they surpassed Buhler by eight points to record the school's first top three state finish.

Junior Reese Johnson, sophomores Claire Brown, Bree Gassman and Nova Ptacek, along with freshmen Lola Edwards, Maddy Rhamy and Erin Apple, will all go down in school history as they became the first Wildcat team to bring home state hardware.

"It means the world to me to be a part of the first team ever to place at state," Rhamy said. "Coming into the state meet, I was just hoping our team would be in the top half, so you could imagine my excitement when our team placed third. I didn't even know we made school history until our coaches told us."

Rhamy was one of two freshmen who earned top 10 finishes individually, along with Edwards. Rhamy finished eighth overall in 20 minutes and 58 seconds, while Edwards was right behind her in 10th in 21:02.

Junior Reese Johnson also garnered a state medal as she was 15th in 21:28 to help the Lady Cats to an historic performance.

It was a proud moment for many in the Louisburg program, and included in that is John Reece. The longtime Wildcat head coach was all smiles following his team's performance.

"It is 23 years the making," coach Reece said. "You always have the plans and goals to get to state and then you get a group to go to state and do something great. This year was one of those. With the Frontier League as tough as it is, and then getting third there, put it in our heads that maybe we could do this. They all went out and ran their races, and that just shows their grit and determination and who they are."

A week earlier, the Wildcats also made history as it was the first time in school history when they qualified the entire boys team to the state meet as they took third at regionals.



2. Boys Soccer Finishes Runner-Up At State

As the Louisburg players huddled around their state plaque, many of them looked at it in awe and wonder.

“Hey guys, we won this,” a player shouted.

The statement was obvious at the time, but nonetheless, their excitement was more than warranted.

For the first time in program history, the Louisburg boys soccer team brought home a plaque from the state final four as the Wildcats defeated Rose Hill, 3-0, on Saturday in the third place match of the Class 4-1A state tournament at Stryker Sports Complex in Wichita.

It was only the second time in school history that the Wildcats had it made it this far, with the other being in 2016, when they finished fourth.

“There are only six teams in the entire state that get to end their year with a win and we wanted to be one of those teams,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We want to be able to hang up a banner on our field and we wanted a plaque so that no one can forget what these kids earned and what they did this season. I am so proud of all of them.”

It was a program defining moment for the Wildcats as they began the weekend searching for a state championship, but lost 2-0 to Bishop Miege on Friday in the semifinals. Still, recording the best finish in school history is nothing for someone to hang their head about, and the Wildcats came out Saturday wanting to make sure they brought some hardware home.

“It’s absolutely crazy to think about what we have accomplished this year, partly because I have only played soccer in high school,” senior captain Logan Faulkner said. “Bringing a state plaque back will just be a reminder of what we did and how we reached our goal.”



1. COVID-19 Cancels Spring Sports

In March, Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly closed all schools for the rest of the 2019-20 school year due to the spread of COVID-19.

When most students hear school has been closed, especially in the winter, cheers erupt. In this case, however, the tone was much more somber – especially among the senior class.

Proms were canceled. Any plans they had for a graduation ceremony were put on hold, and for more than 30 seniors, their last opportunity at playing a sport at Louisburg High School was taken away.

In fact, close to 200 students were planning on participating in an activity in the spring, but with no school, the Kansas State High School Activities Association followed suit and canceled the spring season the day after Gov. Kelly's declaration.

Students, parents and coaches alike have had to come to grips that a season they had been looking forward to all year, was never going to happen. Tears flowed, walls were punched in frustration and some were left speechless.

There would be no game days, no Senior Nights and no postseason runs. Athletes had to figure out how to cope with this fact and it was a challenge for the Louisburg girls soccer, track and field, baseball, softball, golf and swim teams.

Many of those teams had big postseason aspirations after success in 2019 and were left wondering what could have been.

Six Wildcats named to all-state team; Conley coach of the year



Louisburg boys soccer coach, Kyle Conley, was named the Class 4-1A Coach of the Year by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association.

Coming off its best season in program history, the Louisburg boys soccer team is seeing its hard work pay off in a big way following the Wildcats' third place state finish.

Six Louisburg players recently earned all-state honors by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association. An even bigger honor came to head coach Kyle Conley, as he was named as the Class 4-1A Coach of the Year.

Junior Braden Yows, senior Treston Carlson, sophomore Cade Gassman and junior Michael Seuferling were named to the all-state first team. Senior Luke Faulkner and sophomore Mack Newell were selected to the second team.

It was a great ending for what has been a memorable season for the Wildcats.

"I think our team had fantastic representation on the 4A-1A All State team this season," Conley said. "I felt that these young men earned these positions because the play of their teammates helped allow them to earn these honors. None of these awards are possible without a supportive team behind

them. Individually, these young men had fantastic seasons and represented our school to the best of their abilities.”

As for Conley, he guided the Wildcats to a 16-2 record on the season and the team’s highest finish in program history when Louisburg ousted Rose Hill, 3-0, in the state third-place game.

Conley had won the honor twice before on the girls’ side, but this is his first recognition for the boys.

“It is an unbelievable humbling honor to be recognized by my peers,” Conley said. “There are so many quality coaches within 4A-1A, it is a tremendous honor. None of this is possible though without the kids I get to work with each and every day. They were pushed and challenged each and every day by Bobby (Bovaird) and I, and our boys met the standard. I am extremely proud of these young men with all of their accomplishments and their play this season.”



On the pitch, the Wildcats dominated many of their opponents this year and the six players were a big part of that success.

Carlson led the Wildcats in goals this past season with 16 and

scored eight game-winning goals and finished the year with 37 points. As for Yows, he broke a program record with a team-high 21 assists to go along with seven goals.

Gassman was also a spark for the Wildcats offensively. He scored 13 goals on the season to go along with eight assists.

Seuferling played a big part on the Wildcat back line. As an outside back, he didn't give up a goal all season and was one of the leaders of the Wildcat defense, along with Faulkner.

Newell, a sophomore, was in his first year as a varsity goalie and he shined. He finished with 88 saves on the year and the Wildcat defense, which Faulkner and Seuferling were a big part of, gave up only 11 goals in 18 matches.

THREE WILDCATS NAMED TO ALL-METRO TEAM

First the first time in several seasons, the Kansas City area soccer coaches got together to make a large and small class all-metro team.

Louisburg was well represented as junior Braden Yows was named as a first-team midfield selection. Senior Treston Carlson and sophomore Cade Gassman were selected to the all-metro second team as forwards.