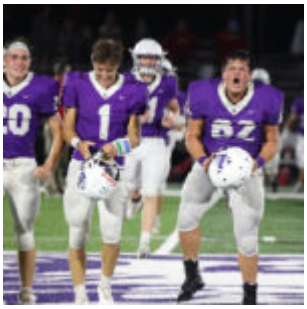
# Wildcats ‘Battle’ back to defeat Tonganoxie in overtime



***Louisburg quarterback Declan Battle (1) and junior Carson Wade (20) celebrates with teammate J.R. Rooney (62) following the Wildcats’ come-from-behind 34-28 overtime win Friday over Tonganoxie.***

Things looked bleak on a couple different occasions for Louisburg during Friday’s home opener against Tonganoxie.

The Wildcats were down 15 points at halftime and Tonganoxie had a chance to run out the clock for a win late in the fourth quarter in Louisburg territory.

Neither situation looked all that optimistic for the Wildcats.

The Louisburg players, however, had different ideas.

That belief helped the Wildcats to a memorable 34-28 overtime win against the Chieftains – a victory that left players, coaches and fans buzzing.

“Our kids grew up is what happened,” Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. “You could see it in their face, you could see it in their eyes and they believed in themselves and in each other. They put themselves in the right spots and made the plays. It was awesome to see for them – not for me or the other coaches. This is for them.”

Sophomore quarterback Declan Battle was a key piece in the Louisburg comeback as he accounted for four Wildcat touchdowns

and ran in two 2-point conversions.

Battle totaled 212 yards of total offense and had two key touchdown passes in the fourth quarter to force overtime and ran in both conversions. He also ran in the game-winning touchdown in overtime.



***Quarterback Declan Battle runs in for his first of four touchdowns Friday against Tonganoxie.***

“You are going to see his name quite a bit,” Ebenstein said of Battle. “He is going to be a dude, for sure. He stepped up to the plate for us. He had one under thrown ball that was picked off, but I could see it in his face when he came off the sidelines that he wasn’t going to do it again. Declan was awesome out there.”

The game was tight early as the Wildcats trailed just 7-6 in the second quarter after a Battle 9-yard touchdown run. However, the Chieftains extended the lead with a pair of touchdowns to take a 21-6 advantage at halftime over

Louisburg.

It didn’t look great at the time for the Wildcats. Going back to their last game against Spring Hill, Louisburg had been outscored 52-6 in their first six quarters of football.

Then, whatever it was, something seemed to click.

“We went into halftime and just challenged them,” Ebenstein said. “We challenged them to be the players that they are and be in the right spot to make the plays.”



***Jackson Howard fights off a block to make a tackle Friday for Louisburg.***

Late in the third, the Wildcats put together a drive that ended on a 2-yard touchdown run from junior Riley Van Eaton. After a missed extra point, Louisburg still trailed 21-12 going into the final quarter.

Louisburg (1-1) was driving early in the fourth when they faced a fourth and six on the Tonganoxie 33. Battle hit Van Eaton for a first down to keep the drive alive and the Wildcats took advantage.

Battle threw a high-arching pass to the end zone and junior Jackson Kush came back to settle under the ball and caught the 22-yard touchdown. Battle ran it in for two points and the Wildcats trailed by just one.

The Wildcat defense stepped up to make another big play as they appeared to stop a Tonganoxie drive when junior Jase Hovey made a big hit on a Chieftain player to break up the pass attempt that would have forced a punt.

Instead, Hovey was called for leading with his helmet and turned into a personal foul penalty to keep the Chieftain drive alive.

“That was just his judgment call,” Ebenstein said of the official. “When I looked at the replay, he had his hands out front and made a hit. Hovey is just a big kid, and when he hits people it is going to make a thud. It was two big kids going hard. That is just how football goes.”



***Louisburg linebacker Nathan Vincent (51) celebrates a big stop with his teammates.***

Tonganoxie put more doubt in the Wildcats' heads when Chieftain senior Sam Kleidosty broke free for a 33-your touchdown run to go back up eight.

Doubt really started to set in when the Wildcats offense turned the ball over on downs on their own 20-yard line.

The Chieftains could either score or run out the clock – both would have given them a victory.

Instead, the Wildcat defense saved their best performance for the end as they held Tonganoxie short on a fourth and 1. Louisburg got the ball back with more than two minutes on its own 11-yard line.

"Our defense stepped up when we needed them the most,"

Ebenstein said. “They were amazing for us.”

It was more than enough time for Battle.

On the first play of the drive, Battle connected with receiver Mason Dobbins, who leaped over the defender to grab the 31-yard pass.




***Junior Mason Dobbins leaps in the air to make a 31-yard catch in the fourth quarter.***

That all set up the game-tying score as Battle found a wide-open Caden Caplinger in the end zone for a 29-yard touchdown. Battle converted the 2-point conversion to tie it at 28 with just more than a minute remaining.

Louisburg’s defense held Tonganoxie at midfield and senior Aiden Barker ended regulation with a sack to force overtime.

Each team got a chance to score from the 10-yard line in overtime and the Wildcats got some help right from the start.

Tonganoxie was called offsides to start the drive, which moved the ball up to the 5 for Louisburg. The Wildcats capitalized for a 3-yard touchdown run to go ahead for the first time in the game, despite failing on the 2-point conversion.

It was again the defense's turn to step up and they did. Louisburg forced two incompletions in the end zone on the final two plays of the game to pull off the comeback.



***Layne Ryals and Jase Hovey (22) stuff a Tonganoxie runner at the line of scrimmage on Friday at Wildcat Stadium.***

"I had no doubt that we were going to score," Ebenstein said. "I honestly thought we were going to get the 2-point conversion because we were just kind of rolling at that point. Our defense just played lights out there in overtime."

Louisburg got big performances from several positions as four different players scored touchdowns and there were many big performances on defense.

Carson Wade, Tom Koontz and Layne Ryals each finished with a team-high nine tackles, while Hovey had eight to go along with two pass breakups and an interception.

Barker, who had the sack at end of regulation, also had six tackles and a fumble recovery. Jackson Howard also had eight tackles with linebacker Nathan Vincent.

“We are in a position to where we don’t have a superstar or we don’t have a kid that we are featuring,” Ebenstein said. “We are just playing team football and going out there and making plays. Kush caught a touchdown, Caden caught a touchdown and one guy that doesn’t get seen as much is Kolby Kattau. He didn’t carry the rock a lot, but he set the edge on almost everything.

“Aiden Barker is a monster. He does everything you ask and he does everything right. I wish I had 25 more Aiden Barkers.”



***Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein celebrates with his players following Friday's overtime win.***

The Wildcats will try for their second straight win this Friday when they travel to Baldwin. Ebenstein hopes this victory can propel his team moving forward.

"This win is going to be huge for us," Ebenstein said. "We were down by multiple scores and they came back and put it together to win. This was a huge growing moment."

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## SCORING SUMMARY

**First quarter**

T: Andrew Colvert 6 pass from Trevor McGraw (Jackson McWilliams kick)

L: Declan Battle 9 run (kick failed)

**Second quarter**

T: Colton Brusven 20 run (McWilliams kick)

T: Sam Kleidosty 14 pass from McGraw (McWilliams kick)

**Third quarter**

L: Riley Van Eaton 2 run (kick failed)

**Fourth quarter**

L: Jackson Kush 22 pass from Battle (Battle run)

T: Kleidosty 33 run (McWilliams kick)

L: Caden Caplinger 29 pass from Battle (Battle run)

**Overtime**

L: Battle 3 run (2-point failed)

## STATISTICS

RUSHING – Declan Battle 22-76; Riley Van Eaton 16-50; Kolby Kattau 2-5

PASSING – Battle 11-18-136

RECEIVING – Mason Dobbins 2-38; Jackson Kush 2-32; Caden Caplinger 1-29; Van Eaton 4-19; Kolby Kattau 1-18

TACKLES – Carson Wade 9, Tom Koontz 9, Layne Ryals 9, Jase Hovey 8, Nathan Vincent 8, Jackson Howard 8, Aiden Barker 6, Kolby Kattau 5, Bryce Gage 5, Lucas Swartz 2, J.R. Rooney 2, Kaven Bartlett 1, Ashton Moore 1, Trace Eslinger 1, Noah Cowell 1.

# Wildcats shutout in season opening loss to Spring Hill



***Louisburg junior running back Riley Van Eaton is engulfed by several Spring Hill defenders during the Wildcats' loss Friday at Spring Hill High School.***

SPRING HILL – It wasn't the opener the Louisburg football team was hoping for.

Fletcher Pankey made sure of that.

The Spring Hill quarterback threw for 273 yards and four touchdowns as the Broncos handed the Wildcats a 31-0 setback Friday at Spring Hill High School.

The Wildcats, who were playing with number of underclassmen – some in their first varsity action – had to go up against a Bronco team that featured several returners from a season ago.

"Every loss is disappointing, but the first one always burns a little more because you have it in mind all summer long when you prep," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "Our kids played with good effort, but we made too many mistakes and our opponent was a senior-led team and they did not make many mistakes. Good thing is those mistakes are all correctible so we fill fix them."

It was as defensive matchup to begin the game and neither team could move the ball effectively. But it was Spring Hill's defense that turned the tide.




***Louisburg junior Layne Ryals (left) and Carson Wade team up to bring down a Spring Hill player Friday.***

The Broncos sacked Wildcat quarterback Declan Battle and forced a fumble. Spring Hill recovered deep in Louisburg territory and found then end zone on a 22-yard pass from Pankey to Kameron Crotchett.

Louisburg mishandled a punt on its next possession, which gave the Broncos good field position. Still, Spring Hill had a third-and-long when Pankey hit Daniel Mitchell on a 35-yard touchdown with 1:07 left in the first half.

“The first half was a tale of two mistakes,” Ebenstein said. “We did not block our 70’s pass protection correctly and it led to a hit on our quarterback, causing a fumble and a fumbled punt.  We made the mistakes and they scored and they did not make mistakes.”

The Wildcats appeared to have some momentum in the third quarter as they turned the Broncos over on downs inside the redzone. However, Louisburg was called for pass interference, which gave Spring Hill new life.

Pankey took advantage of the opportunity as he connected with Mitchell on a 14-yard touchdown pass to go up 21-0.



***Louisburg cornerback Kaven Bartlett stretches out to try and bring down Spring Hill's Kameron Crotchett on Friday.***

From there, the Wildcats had to change things up offensively and were never able to get in a rhythm against the Broncos defense.

"Spring Hill's defense was very good," Ebenstein said. "Our plan was good but we did have to shift it when we got down. We also had some drops which ended some drives. Again all things

that can be corrected and will be.”

Louisburg will try for that first win this Friday when it hosts Tonganoxie in its home opener. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

“Tonganoxie is a very well coached team so it will be a great challenge for Friday,” Ebenstein said. “Our guys will be ready to redeem ourselves from last week.”

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## SCORING SUMMARY

**Second Quarter**

SH: Kameron Crotchett 22 pass from Fletcher Pankey (Rocco Russo) kick

SH: Daniel Mitchell 35 pass from Pankey (Russo kick)

**Third quarter**

SH: Mitchell 14 pass from Pankey (Russo kick)

SH: Rocco Russo 36 FG

**Fourth quarter:**

SH: Zach Knowlton 22 pass from Pankey

## STATISTICS

**LOUISBURG**

RUSHING – Declan Battle 15-32, Kolby Kattau 6-17, Riley Van Eaton 10-16

PASSING – Battle 3-16-32

RECEIVING – Jackson Kush 1-16, Van Eaton 1-13, Isaiah Whitley 1-3.

# Doles happy to be back on field after season-ending injury



***Louisburg senior Brandon Doles is congratulated by his teammates after recovering a fumble against Fort Scott during a scrimmage last week.***

Brandon Doles remembers the day well.

It was Sept. 18 and the Louisburg football team hosted Baldwin and Doles was hoping for a big junior year with the Wildcats.

That night couldn’t have gotten off to a better start as Doles caught a pass and lumbered 80 yards near the goal line to set up a Louisburg score.

Doles was pumped. The fans were going crazy and so were his teammates. Unfortunately, at least for that moment, it was a brutal combination.

Following the catch and run, Doles jumped up to celebrate with his teammates only to suffer a freak accident. In an instant, his hope for a special season was dashed away.

After the celebration, Doles landed wrong and suffered a broken fibula and dislocated ankle, in which all the ligaments

were torn.

“When it happened it felt like it was a dream because you never really think these things will happen to you,” Doles said. “You see it on TV of other athletes doing it, but you never think it will happen to you. I just remember not feeling anything when it first happened. But once the adrenaline wore off, it was the worst pain I have ever experienced.”

When Doles came down, teammates and coaches instantly knew something wasn’t right and head coach Robert Ebenstein got onto the field along with the trainer.




***Brandon Doles goes up to catch a pass during a game earlier last season.***

“Brandon’s injury was such a weird, unfortunate and freak situation,” Ebenstein said. “To be honest it wasn’t even a

football injury. Everyone was so amped up and excited to get to him, he was met full force to do his celebratory ritual with a teammate. Too much steam rolling in caught him off guard and just came down funky on it and it as a gnarly break."

The injury not only ended his season, but also cost him his wrestling season after becoming a state qualifier as a sophomore.

The disappointment was hard to get over, especially after being saddled to a wheelchair as he recovered from his injuries. He tried to get through it as best he could.

It was a six month recovery process for Doles, that included not doing anything the first two months, which was hard.

"It's always tough to miss a game, but to miss your whole season is even worse," Doles said. "Knowing that I would never play football with those seniors again was pretty hard and knowing that I could have medaled at state for wrestling made me really upset. But once I was able to kinda move around I tried to stop thinking about the fact I couldn't play, I just tried to be there for my team and help support them from the sidelines."

He then followed up with physical therapy for three straight months, trying to get strength back in his leg for baseball season.

Doles was slated to be a big part of the Wildcat team a year ago, as he was the starting tight end, linebacker and long snapper. It was a difficult blow for Doles and the Louisburg coaches.

It was a tough loss for sure," Ebenstein said. "Last year our depth was a major issue, so moving forward without him was tough."

Depth is no longer an issue for the Wildcats this season as they have more than 80 players out for football. Instead of playing both ways, Doles will just play on defense at the linebacker spot.

As for the recovery, he is all healed up and ready to join his teammates under the Friday night lights again when they open up tonight at Spring Hill.

“I’m so excited and ready to be back on the field with my brothers,” Doles said “We haven’t beat Spring Hill on their own field in awhile and it will feel so good if we can finally beat them.

“Since I’ve been back I’ve tweaked my ankle a couple of times at the beginning of baseball. But since spring I haven’t had a problem with it. Sometimes it will be sore, but for the most part I’m back to 100 percent.”

That is good news for the Wildcats as the prepare for what could be a special season as they try to get that Frontier League championship and a good seed in the playoffs.

“All summer long we put in a lot of work to get to where we are now,” Doles said. “We are working hard everyday at practice and learning everything the coaches are putting in so that way we can beat Spring Hill. Only playing one side of the ball will be nice because players will be able to rest when they are not on the field so that way once they get back out there we will all be ready to go 100 percent every snap.”

Along the typical practice work, Ebenstein has also focused on the art of celebrating with his players.

“We now are perfecting celebratory handshakes where our feet stay on the ground,” he joked.

That is all right by Doles.

# Louisburg hopes depth, new faces breed success



***Wildcat junior J.R. Rooney gets fired up after a big hit during the team's scrimmage last Friday against Fort Scott.***

For most of last season, depth was always a concern for Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein.

He had a lot of athletes play on both sides of the ball, then throw in a slew of injuries, and the Wildcats found themselves worn down by the end of the game.

It was a common theme that only seemed to become a bigger problem during Louisburg's 4-5 season.

Needless to say, depth should be the least of the Wildcats' problem this year.

Louisburg has 83 players out in 2021 and Ebenstein decided to take a new approach. Since the Wildcats have depth, many of those athletes will only be playing one side of the ball.

It is something that Ebenstein hopes will pay off for the Wildcats in the long run.

"This is by far the most depth we have ever had," Ebenstein said. "We have a lot of kids who have put in the time and the work, they are varsity ready and have earned a spot. As of now

we still plan on mostly having a full platoon for Friday. There will be nine guys on both sides that will be one way starters.”

With that, there will be plenty of new faces on the field for Louisburg. The Wildcats have just 10 seniors and will feature a group that is made up of mainly underclassmen.

Sophomores and freshmen will play pivotal roles this season, but Ebenstein is excited to see what he players can do this year.

“These guys have been working hard, all summer long, two-a-days, jamboree week and this week as well,” Ebenstein said. “We have also changed our practice around to put an emphasis into film study and our guys have been putting in the time with film study as well.  We are very excited to get going today against Spring Hill.”



***Sophomore Declan Battle is the Wildcat starting quarterback this season.***

Offensively, the Wildcats will feature a different look and will have a new signal caller in the process.

Sophomore Declan Battle will take the reins at quarterback this year as the Wildcats will run different schemes throughout the season.

“Declan is a competitor and a football guy,” Ebenstein said. “He understands the game extremely well for any high school player and he is only a sophomore. Our offense is quite a bit different than last year, but the mentality of tough downhill football will always be our focus.”

Senior Kolby Kattau will lead the running back group, along with junior Riley VanEaton, sophomore Caden Caplinger and freshman Ashton Moore.

Juniors Mason Dobbins and Jackson Kush, along with senior Liam DeVary, will be the team's wide receivers. Isaiah Whitley, a junior, will be at tight end.

Senior Aiden Barker and junior Nathan Vincent are returning starters on the offensive line, and will be joined by senior Reid Justesen, junior Will Hutsell and sophomore Scott Thornton.

Defensively, the Wildcats will also show some new things and will have strong leadership from their linebacking core.

Senior Brandon Doles returns from a season-ending leg injury last season to lead the way, while fellow senior Bryce Gage, Vincent and Moore will also see a lot of playing time at that spot.




***Sophomore Wyatt Holland wraps up a Fort Scott player last week***

***during the team's jamboree.***

Barker, junior J.R. Rooney, and sophomores Jackson Howard and Wyatt Holland will lead the way up front. While seniors Gavin Whisenhunt, Luis Rios, Terrance Foster, junior Trace Eslinger and freshman Lucas Swartz could all see time as well.

Junior Jase Hovey is a returning starter in the secondary and will be joined seniors Tom Koontz, Kattau, along with juniors Layne Ryals, Carson Wade and Kaven Bartlett. Sophomores Hunter Heinrich and Luke Hill could also see time.

"Coach (Drew) Harding, along with (Alex) Gentges and (Kade) Larson, have done a great job molding the defense into their vision. They have implemented a lot of new schemes, blitzes, and coverages. There are a lot of upperclassmen on the defense and very competitive players as well.

"The defensive line will be a solid group and the linebackers are a strength of our team. The secondary will have some playmakers and some of the smartest football players we have."

With so many new faces this season, Ebenstein got a good look at his team last Friday when Louisburg hosted Ottawa and Fort Scott for a jamboree.



***Senior Aiden Barker will play big roles on both sides of the ball this year for Louisburg.***

“The jamboree was a good experience and getting to break up the monotony of going against ourselves was a great change of pace,” he said. “It also gave us a live game speed look, and we prepared well for it and for the most part executed as we should have.”

It all counts beginning tonight when the Wildcats travel to Spring Hill for their season opener. Even with all the new faces, they are hoping for a memorable year.

“This group has very high expectations,” Ebenstein said. “Undefeated league champs is always the goal, and hosting week 9 and going week by week from there. This team has a lot of potential, but potential is just that. We have a lot to learn and there will be many guys with their first Friday night action. As long as we catch up to the speed of the game and communicate well we will be fine. From there, effort will take care of the rest.”

# 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.

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# Hupp enjoys experience at Kansas Shrine Bowl



***Louisburg grad Andy Hupp (36) runs onto the field with his defensive teammates during the Kansas Shrine Bowl on June 26 at Hutchinson Community College.***

When the Louisburg football season came to an end last

November, Andy Hupp thought his football playing days were done.

Hupp was ready to put the sport he loved behind him and focus on his future. However, football wasn’t done with him just yet.

Earlier this year, Hupp was selected to participate in the 2021 Kansas Shrine Bowl and represent the East team on the defensive side of the ball.

So for one last time, Hupp put on the pads late last month and played about half of the game in the East’s 14-0 loss at Hutchinson Community College.

Despite the defeat, the Shrine Bowl was an experience Hupp won’t soon forget.

“It was a blessing to be able to strap up the pads one final time,” Hupp said. “Although it was really fun creating a bond with players that I’ve always played against and been ‘rivals’ with (Branden Martin from Tonganoxie and Carter Stanchfield from Paola) I really missed playing this sport with my boys back home.

“It is really sad that I will never play football again, but I left the game on one of the most prestigious notes possible in my opinion. So I am happy with the way my career ended.”




Hupp, who played on the defensive line, was a part of what was a defensive battle between the two teams.

The West had just a 7-0 lead late in the game before sealing the win late on a turnover and a score.

The Louisburg grad recorded two tackles in the contest as he played close to half of the snaps.

“It was a different feeling playing in this game,” Hupp said. “It was a college regulated game with media breaks and 12 minute quarters so it was really fun with all of the different factors, especially when you add in the skill level of everyone on the field. It made it feel like a real college football game.

“I made a couple tackles, and a forced incompletion. There was one play where the quarterback was scrambling and I hit him pretty good and my nose started bleeding a lot so I had to go get that fixed.”

Hupp reported to the Shrine Bowl practice a week before the game and the teams had two-a-day practices, scrimmages and film study.

However, it was the opportunity to meet the patients at the Shriners Hospital for Kids that was the highlight of Hupp’s week.

“The experience was definitely one of a kind,” he said. “Meeting some of the Shriners Hospital kids was by far the best part. Their stories are amazing and I’ve never seen bigger smiles.

“All in all, the Shrine Bowl experience was awesome and meeting those kids puts a lot into perspective. I’m glad I had the opportunity to play for them.”

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# Weston Guetterman named 2021 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year



Weston Guetterman had a lot on his plate during his final year at Louisburg High School.

Guetterman was the starting quarterback for the football team, after playing wide receiver for most of his career.

He continued that leadership onto the basketball court where he was the point guard on the Wildcats' state runner-up team that had the best finish in school history.

Playing high pressure positions in two popular sports didn't seem to both Guetterman much as he rose to the occasion. Those were some of the reasons he was selected as the 2021 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year.

"I am truly honored to have been named athlete of the year," Guetterman said. "It was never really a goal of mine to achieve this. I just wanted to be the best I could be for each of my teams and for the town. Each of them were a huge part of why I won this award. It is their award as well."

Going into the 2020 football season, the Wildcats were looking for someone to lead the team at the quarterback spot. After being an all-league receiver a year ago, Guetterman took the reins and didn't back down from the challenge.

Guetterman ended the year with 548 yards rushing and six touchdowns. He also 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.



“Weston is an all-around team player, who is willing to do what is best for the team,” Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein said. “Weston was a couple hundred yards away from being the all-time leading receiver in school history (*since 2000). He would have easily been able to achieve that record but he was willing to step up and play quarterback for us this year and did a great job learning the offense and leading our team.”

Basketball is where Guetterman really shined as the Wildcat point guard. He led Louisburg to the Class 4A state tournament, where the Wildcats knocked off Parsons and Augusta to reach the state championship game against Bishop Miege.

The Wildcats went on to finish runner-up and had the best finish in school history. Guetterman 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.

“Weston is an easy guy to root for,” Louisburg basketball coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. “He’s such a humble athlete. He was a 3-year starter in basketball and continued to improve as a player throughout his career. He had a quiet confidence about him that just made him seem comfortable on the court at all times.

“Not only was Weston a great player and leader, but he was always respectful and appreciative of his opportunity to play. He truly loved being a Louisburg athlete and always represented our community the right way.”



It was the state semifinal game against Augusta where Guetterman helped guide the Wildcats to their first state championship game in school history.

He finished with a game-high 21 points to go along with a team-high six steals and four assists.

“My favorite memory was the state semifinal game against Augusta,” Guetterman said. “That was one of the best all around basketball games that I’ve seen or played in. The pure joy and emotion in that game was unmatched. Then running out onto the court to play Miege that Saturday for the championship and seeing a sea of purple – that made the trip.

It was such a joy and we were honored to have the support, even if the outcome wasn’t what we had hoped.”

There are a lot of memories for Guetterman to look back on this past season, but each sport brought something special to the table.

“As far as football goes, there is nothing like a Friday night crowd and I get chills every time I think about it,” Guetterman said. “Every time we took the field I would make sure to run through the tunnel behind my teammates just so that I could take in how much this community cares for our teams. There is nothing like that jog to the sideline with the Bulls theme song pumping through your ears.

“Basketball this year might have been the most fun that I’ve had playing a sport ever. The success that my team and I had was truly a great experience. From hanging with ranked 6A teams to beating our rival Paola three times in a season, I just enjoyed it all.”

Being able to participate in multiple activities left Guetterman with a lot of positives in his high school career and he will take those with him for the rest of his life.

“It is a huge deal that our school offers so many opportunities as far as athletics and extracurricular activities go,” Guetterman said. “It is important, especially for high school age students, to stay busy and active outside of school alone. I loved participating in many sports and keeping myself on my toes.

“Playing the sports that I played in has a team atmosphere, and even though we had success this year, the thing that I will cherish the most are the bonds that I have created with my teammates and coaches throughout the years.”

# Cook excited to help Hutchinson to national championship



***Kody Cook raises the national championship trophy after Hutchinson Community College won the junior college national title on June 5 after a 29-27 win over Snow College.***

HUTCHINSON – Everything about this college football season for Kody Cook wasn't what he expected.

At the same time, that has kind of been the story of his life.

Cook, who is currently the wide receivers coach at Hutchinson Community College, had quite the journey through the college football world after he led Louisburg to its first state championship as the team's quarterback in 2010.

He went to Hutchinson in hopes of continuing as a quarterback, but instead was moved to wide receiver. That was until his final game as a Blue Dragon when, thanks to an injury, he took the reins at quarterback and led Hutchinson to bowl game victory and earned MVP honors.

That performance helped him earn a walk-on spot at Kansas State University, where again they saw him as a wide receiver.

Then in his senior season, again due to injury, Cook was forced into duty as the team's quarterback and helped the Wildcats to a Liberty Bowl appearance.

"Those experiences throughout my life just showed me that if you trust the process, put in the work, do what you are supposed to do, you are going to get rewarded at some point down the line," Cook said. "It is never on your time or when you want it to be, but it will happen. I have learned to do that through Hutch and at K-State. The toughest part is to remain focused."

Cook was tested once again this past season at Hutchinson. The junior college football season was moved to the spring due to COVID-19, and he and the rest of the coaching staff was a little worried about how their roster was going to look.

"The biggest thing we were nervous about, once they said no to the fall and yes to the spring, was that our kids would graduate in the fall and go somewhere else," Cook said. "That is always great for them and something that we want for all our players, but there was a good chance we could have a depleted team because our kids could leave for other places. To be able to make it through the spring, and not have to deal with much of it, it almost helped us. It allowed our younger players get used to everything."

Once again that patience and trust paid off for Cook.

On June 5, Hutchinson won the junior college national championship with a 29-27 victory over Snow College in Little Rock, Ark. It was the school's first national football championship in its 89 years and the Blue Dragons rallied from a 21-10 deficit in the second half to complete the momentous win.

"After going through a year like COVID and watching the players work so hard to try and prepare for a season, it was tough to go through things like that," Cook said. "It is

always special to win a national championship and all the cliche stuff is true. With COVID though, it just meant a little more. Plus being able to do it at my alma mater and to be able to help give Hutch their first national title in 89 years was really special. It is exciting and we are ready to do it again."

> *So happy for and proud of Kody Cook who serves as WR coach for this years national championship team-Hutchison Community College. Deserved*
>
> *— Bill Snyder (@CoachBillSnyder) June 9, 2021*

After leaving Kansas State as a student assistant under then-head coach Bill Snyder, Cook realized coaching was his passion. So, he decided to take the long road toward achieving that goal.

It started in Hutchinson in 2017 as a tight ends coach, before becoming an assistant coach at Mill Valley High School in 2018.

"It has been hard, with the first couple years, especially," Cook said. "I got the opportunity to coach at Mill Valley for a year, and they have a great program over there and Joel Applebee does a great job as they have won state the last two years. Then the opportunity was presented to me to come back to Hutch and coach with one of my mentors and it was a great opportunity for me. I jumped at the chance.

"I am always looking forward to the future and what it holds. The toughest thing for me is being able to control what you can control. That is the tough part when you have something like COVID or whatever, and I think this season taught me to be patient and just embrace the moment."

Along with coaching, also comes the challenges of recruiting –

which is also something that Cook knows he doesn’t always have control of, either.

Cook is responsible for recruiting the Kansas City area and also Louisiana for the Blue Dragons and he enjoys getting to tell players about his alma mater.

“It can be stressful because you are playing phone tag with 17 or 18-year-old kids, but I enjoy getting to go to different places,” Cook said. “To be able to go down to that part of the country (Louisiana) that is football-oriented is really awesome. I get to talk on the phone with these young men, and it kind of takes me back to what it was like for me growing up. There are a lot of highs and lows and a lot of unknowns, but you get to experience that with them.

“It is enjoyable for me to be able to be able to tell them about the Hutch program and I just want to tell them the truth and have them make their own decision. It is important to be transparent. Then when you get the official word that they signed on the dotted line for Hutch, you are excited for the player, but at the same time you are excited for yourself at the same time. I just love every part of college football.”

Coaching at the collegiate level is not easy and one where you have to pay your dues and Cook wants to work his way toward the top. He has dreams of becoming a head coach or an offensive coordinator at the Power 5 level, but with everything else in his life, he has learned patience and hard work is key.

“Whenever God is willing and allows it to happen, it will happen,” Cook said. “Everything is already written and you just have to trust the process and when it happens, it happens. I can only control what I can control, but I would love to be a head coach or offensive coordinator at that level one day.”

As for getting back to Louisburg, Cook hasn’t had much of a

chance to visit his old stomping grounds, but he does have advice for those players who are interested in playing or coaching in college one day.

“If you want to play at this level, you have to have attention to detail and be disciplined,” Cook said. “I think the biggest thing we see from kids coming in is they think they are disciplined, but then they get here and we show them what being disciplined actually looks like. It is more than just football. If you are a hard worker on the field, but if you are not doing the right thing off the field, paying attention in the classroom or not going to class, it is going to be hard to succeed in life. Everything goes together. What is tough for a 17 or 18-year-old kid to realize sometimes is what I do outside of football, affects football. They think it is separate, but it isn’t.

“My advice to them is to put your all into everything. I know it is cliche, but it is true. You need to buy in and trust the process. When I was 18 years old, I struggled with that sometimes and with my school work. It hurt me and that is part of the reason I had to go to Hutchinson. You learn how you are supposed to do things and it teaches you a certain way to be competitive on the football field and in life. Just stay focused, stay humble and stay disciplined and everything will work itself out in the end.”

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# 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' 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.

# Younggren excited to join Fort Hays football program



***Louisburg senior Alec Younggren fights through a block during a game earlier this season. Younggren will look a lot of the same more as he will join the Fort Hays State football program this fall.***

Alec Younggren had a senior year that wasn't exactly what he was expecting.

He transferred to a new school for his final year of high school, and then he suffered an injury that forced him to miss almost half of the football season. Younggren went through all of it while trying to get recruited to play football in college.

The situation wasn't ideal, but Younggren made the most of it and eventually found his future home in the process.

Younggren signed his letter of intent to play football at Fort Hays State in the fall as he looks to continue enjoying the game he loves.

"It's means the world to me to able to play college football and it's has been my dream ever since I was a kid," Younggren said. "It's everything I've worked for throughout my entire career."

Younggren, who transferred to Louisburg from Olathe South over the summer, thought he would be finishing his high school career there. Instead, with the COVID-19 pandemic threatening school sports in the fall, Younggren moved to Louisburg in hopes of getting to play his senior year.

An injury took away part of his senior year, but he was able finish his season strong as he was named an All-Frontier League first team offensive lineman and was an honorable mention defensive player.




***Louisburg senior Alec Younggren signs his letter of intent to play football at Fort Hays State. Sitting next to Alec (from left) his father Jason, his mother Monica and sister Reece.***

Younggren was also an honorable mention all-state selection by the Topeka Capital-Journal.

The Louisburg senior had a couple different options to choose from, but he felt right at home on his visit to Fort Hays.

“Fort Hays just had something about it that clicked for me,” Younggren said. “The coaches, the athletes, and all-around it was a school I could call home and somewhere I think I can thrive.”

The Tigers have become one of the top teams in the MIAA that last few seasons and Younggren hopes to help in that regard. Fort Hays had a 17-6 record and an MIAA championship the last two years before COVID-19 impacted the world of college football.

“The coaches are some of the best in their position throughout college football I believe,” Younggren said. “They have me playing defensive end for now so we will see how it goes.

“The goals I have going into college football, and for college itself, is to better myself and become the best I can be.”

As for Louisburg, where he also finished as a state runner-up wrestler, Younggren enjoyed his time with the Wildcat program.

“I felt very welcome the second I came to Louisburg,” Younggren said. “There are great people, great coaches and all-around felt that I was in the right spot to finish out high school football.”