2020 Athlete of the Year Nominees



For the past four 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 third 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."

Obviously, 2020 has not been the typical year when the spring was cancelled due to COVID-19. However, I still want to make sure those athletes that were set to make an impact in the spring were recognized as well.

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 voted for their top male and female athletes and then I tabulated the results. I will release the results in the coming days.

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!

Female Athlete of the Year Nominees



Haley Cain – Senior – Volleyball, Basketball, Soccer

Haley was a three-sport athlete during her time at Louisburg High School and recorded the rare feat of earning 12 varsity letters.

In the fall, she helped the Louisburg volleyball team to its third consecutive state tournament and was selected to represent Kansas in the Greater Kansas City All-Star Match. She was also named to the All-Frontier League second team as a middle hitter.

Cain was also a two-time team captain for the Louisburg girls basketball team and was a key player for the Lady Cats this

past season. She was also set to be a big contributor for the Wildcat soccer team in the spring as well.



Trinity Moore – Senior – Cross Country, Soccer

Trinity made cross country history for the Wildcats this past season as she medaled third at state and broke her own school record in the process. The Louisburg senior also medaled at state all four years.

Moore was also a returning starter for the Wildcat soccer team and was a key factor in helping the Wildcats to three consecutive state final fours and two state runner-up finishes.

She started 43 games for the Wildcats and concluded her career with 18 goals and eight assists. She is fifth in school

history with 44 points.



Erin Lemke – Senior – Volleyball, Soccer

Erin was another multi-sport athlete for Louisburg as she was a member of the volleyball and soccer teams. Lemke was an outside hitter for the Lady Cat volleyball team and was selected to represent Kansas in the Greater Kansas City All-Star Match.

On the soccer team, Lemke was a two-time team captain for the Wildcats and was a returning all-league and all-state player. She was also one of the team’s top goal scorers.

Lemke had a very productive career for the Wildcats as she started 48 of her 59 games and earned all-league and all-state honors as a sophomore and a junior.

She finished her career with 29 goals and 27 assists and Lemke has the second-best assist mark for a season in program history with 17 and is third in career assists. She also added seven game-winning goals.



Reilly Ratliff-Becher – Senior – Volleyball, Powerlifting, Softball

Reilly was a multi-sport athlete for Louisburg High School as she competed in volleyball, power-lifiting and softball. She was an honorable mention all-league selection in volleyball as she served as the Lady Cat libero.

Ratliff-Becher was a big part of the Lady Cats' state tournament runs the last three years. She was also selected to participate in the Greater Kansas City All-Star game last November.

As a powerlifter, Reilly recorded her second-straight state championship and took first in each of the three individual events.

Ratliff-Becher was also a returning starter on the Lady Cat softball team after she helped Louisburg to a state tournament appearance a year ago as a catcher and outfielder.

Male Athlete of the Year Nominees



Garrett Rolofson – Senior – Soccer, Basketball, Golf

Garrett is a three-sport athlete for Louisburg as he was a member of the soccer, basketball and golf teams. In soccer, Rolofson served as the Wildcats' goalkeeper and helped Louisburg to a regional title and a school record 16 wins.

Rolofson was named to the All-Frontier League first team and to the all-state second team. He posted eight shutouts on the season and allowed only 17 goals, four of which came from penalty shots. He also finished with 78 saves on the season and allowed the second fewest goals in Class 4-1A.

In basketball, Rolofson was a starter on the Wildcat basketball team and this spring he was all set to help the Wildcat golf team to their second consecutive state tournament

appearance. He was the team’s No. 3 golfer a year ago.



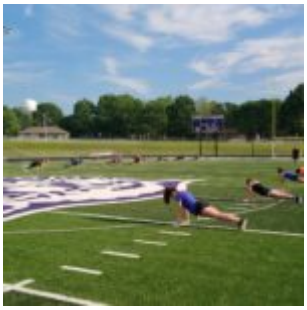
Madden Rutherford – Senior – Football, Baseball

Madden was a multi-sport athlete for Louisburg as he was a key member of the Wildcat football and baseball teams.

Rutherford, who was a team captain on the football team, was selected as a first team All-Frontier League quarterback. Rutherford finished the year with 671 yards passing with eight touchdowns and he also added 245 yards on the ground and four more scores.

On the baseball team, Rutherford was also a returning all-league player and was slated to be the Wildcats’ No. 1 starter this spring.

Wildcat athletes report back for summer conditioning



Almost 80 high school girls attended the first day of summer conditioning on Monday at Louisburg High School.

For the first time in almost three months, Louisburg High School and Louisburg Middle School athletes found themselves back on the field starting Monday at Wildcat Stadium.

It didn’t include any balls, equipment, weights and wasn’t indoors, but more than 300 athletes participated in the mandatory conditioning drills that were set by the Kansas State High School Activities Association.

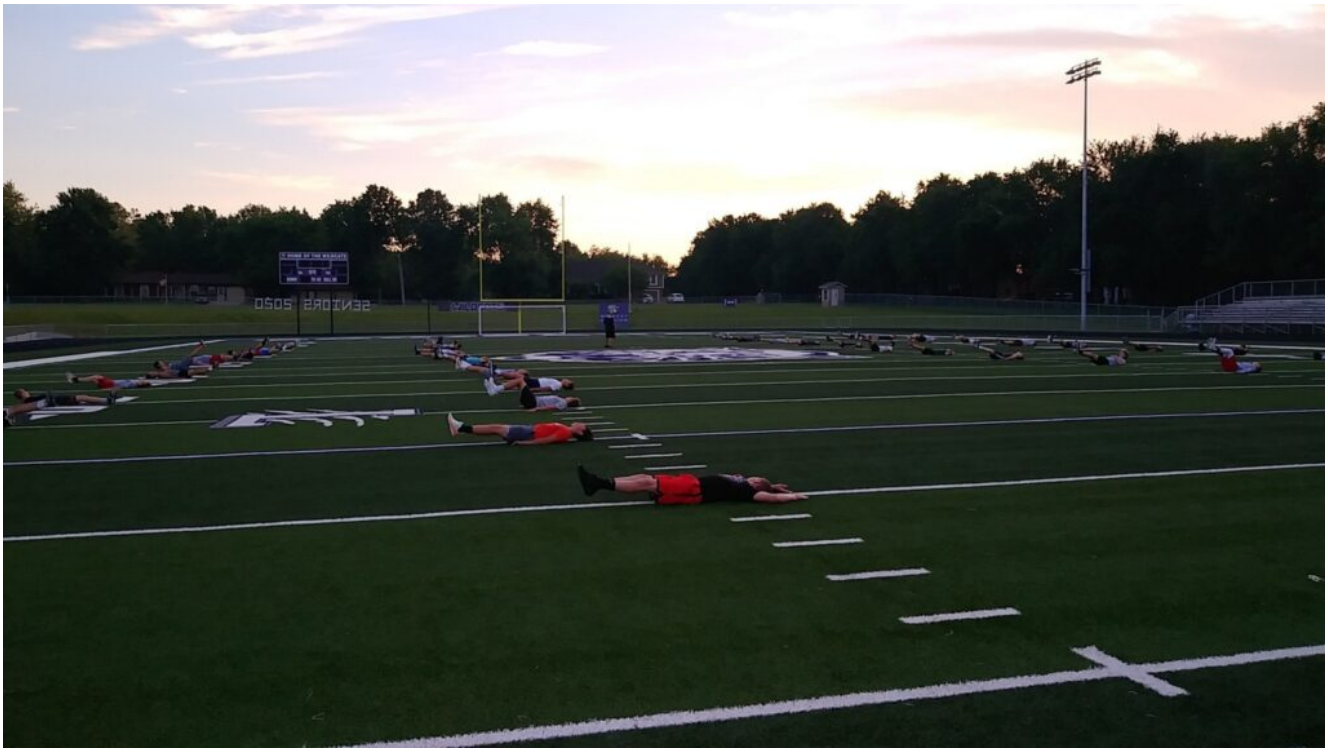
“The turnout was exceptional, and considering the limit on group sizes, distance restrictions, and getting creative in using multiple spaces to accommodate the large numbers in appropriately sized groups allowed in phase three, these coordinators did a great job setting a standard,” Louisburg activities director Michael Pickman said.

This was all following the cancellation of the spring season to the spread of COVID-19 and KSHSAA allowed school districts to begin conditioning exercises on June 1. The Louisburg school district started this past Monday and each athlete must participate in 10 sessions before being able to attend in any team activities or camps.

Several coaches were in attendance running athletes through drills in three separate stations that would allow some space between everyone. Football coaches Robert Ebenstein, Ty Pfannenstiel, Joel McGhee and Drew Harding were on hand to lead drills, along with other staff from within the USD 416 school district.

“There are many coaches who are volunteering and just want to be there to support their athletes,” Pickman said. “It’s what makes the LHS coaching staff stand out from others. However, I have encouraged coaches not directly coordinating weights to stay home as much as they can with numbers restrictions, but so far we haven’t had that be an issue.”

High school boys begin each morning at 6 a.m., for the hour-long workout and high school girls follow and then it all finishes up with middle school. To start there were 121 high school boys in attendance, 79 girls and 126 middle school students.



More than 120 Louisburg High School boys attended the first day of summer conditioning at Wildcat Stadium.

To start the day, each athlete is screened before the start of

conditioning with a temperature check and then they are divided into three groups. Each of them will participate in three stations that focuses on different workouts. There are no more than 45 athletes in a group and the coaches design workouts to promote the six feet of distance.

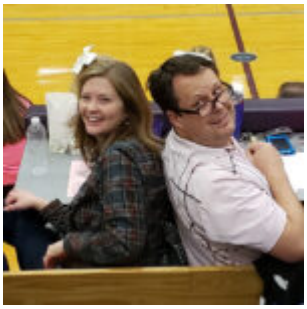
“There were temperatures that needed to be taken and protocol for sanitizing hands and checking in that went efficiently and smoothly overall,” Pickman said. “A lot of planning went into this with the coaches to make sure it went well. And Mr. Holloway (LHS principal) volunteered his time to help take temps at the various sessions.”

As far as cross country goes, interested runners instead attend running sessions held by coach John Reece that will take place throughout the summer and they do not have to attend conditioning.

Whenever the athletes have completed their 10 sessions, they are allowed to participate in team activities the rest of the summer. As of right now, everything is on track to allow athletes to begin attending camps after June 29.

“Everything is progressing so far to according to schedule,” Pickman said. “Assuming the governor’s phase out stage begins when it is supposed to, we will be ready to begin using the weight room, gyms, and sports equipment. Coaches will be able to have practices and then middle school and high school age camps after June 29. The younger kids who do not have to have the 10 days of acclimatization are able to run the week of June 22. With the schedule the way it is, kids should have no problem getting their 10 days of acclimatization needed to participate in camps.”

Dennis leaves lasting legacy in Louisburg, LHS athletics



Damon Dennis, and his wife Karla, pose for quick picture during a timeout at a Louisburg High School basketball game Dennis was announcing. Dennis, who is better known as Doc D, is handing over his business at Louisburg Chiropractic Office to Dr. Jacob Polzin and is stepping away as the LHS team doctor after 28 years of service. His last day at the office is tomorrow (Saturday).

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 his 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.

On Saturday, he will officially leave Louisburg Chiropractic Office and hand the reins over to Dr. Jake Polzin. Add to

that, Dennis is also stepping away as LHS' team doctor and will leave 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.



Dennis (left) and Dr. Jake Polzin pose for a picture in their office. Polzin will officially take over the practice from Dennis after this week, but both have been seeing the patients the last three months.

During the school year, Dennis would leave his place of business every day after 3 to go to the high school to tape up athletes from all different sports and made sure they were all ready to go for practice. After that was over, he would rush back to his office to finish the day treating his patients.

It would be hectic life for some, but it is one that he has treasured for the last nearly three decades.

“My time in practice has been a blessing,” Dennis said. “I truly care about all of the patients and people in the community that I have been involved with. I have tried to be a positive impact on the town through my involvement in different organizations. As with any business, there are bumps in the road. I genuinely appreciate everyone who has had a positive impact on me through these years.

“I have poured my heart and soul in to every aspect of my business and involvement in the community, sometimes at the sacrifice of my wife, Karla. I am eternally grateful for her patience and love. Part of the reason why I am handing over the reigns is that I have a lot of making up for time to do.”



Damon Dennis (middle) walks out of the locker room with the Wildcat football coaches prior to a game.

Dennis and his family have made a lot of sacrifices during his

time and many of the Wildcat coaches – both former and present – appreciate what he has done for them and their players.

“As far as what he has meant to the community, it is immeasurable,” longtime former coach Gary Griffin said. “He came in the first year and made himself available to all the coaches and was there for whatever the kids needed from the medical stuff, to a new pair of shoes, or money to go to a team dinner. He was even there to lend an ear to a kid that was having issues from girlfriends, teacher issues or problems at home.

“For me personally, he was a cheerleader when times were not good, he was an advocate for kids when I didn’t always know what was going on behind the scenes. I trusted Doc like he was a member of the coaching staff. I told him a lot of things in confidence so I could get his advice knowing it would not go any further. As far as the community goes, he is a pillar and he is involved in everything and is held in high regards by most. It is really hard for Doc to tell anyone no, so most of his days are longer than just his office hours. Doc is going to be missed in so many ways. He is a very humble man and he is very deserving of slowing down and enjoying the fruits of his labor.”

A Small Beginning

Back in June of 1992 is when Dennis began to plant his roots in the town he would begin to call home.

Dennis purchased the small satellite office from Dr. Larry Fulk, who at the time also had a practice in Paola. Dennis was less than a year out of school and was eager to get involved in the Louisburg community.

Two months later, Dennis reached out to then Louisburg High School administrator Doug Chisam and asked if he could serve as the team’s doctor – free of charge. Since August of 1992,

Louisburg High School would not be the same.

Dennis made trips over to the high school for treatment and would also follow many of the team's to their games after work was over. It was a life that would go on to create many memories.

"Jim Knox, Don Meek and Doug Chisam were all very supportive and I am forever in their debt," Dennis said. "I started out just going to all games, home and away, and every sport that I could. At that time I was in the office from 6 am to 7 pm and then off to games 3-4 nights a week. The things I have always enjoyed about being the team doctor was the kids and the coaches. High school athletes have not changed since day one. They want someone who cares about and shows interest in what they are doing. I am still close with a lot of the students who have come through the high school and will continue to be.

"My role evolved over the years. I began doing all the taping before practice and games, Impact testing, announcing basketball and other roles as the coaches requested. I enjoy helping others and that is how my role evolved in to so many other areas. Over the years, the coaches have included me and I will always be grateful to them for allowing me to be a part of the experience."



Damon and his wife Karla pose for a picture in front of his office back in the early 90s.

His role got even bigger when the new high school was built and Dennis was asked if he would like to announce basketball games. He certainly didn't mind having a mic in his hand and loved playing off the crowd and making sure the athletes felt a little extra special.

"We had a girls' tournament and Dave Tappan asked me if I would announce the game," Dennis said. "He thought it would be a nice touch to have an announcer. I am not sure he ever asked me to continue, I just did it. I had to be at games anyway and I like to talk, so it worked out. Dave never said to quit, so I just kept doing it.

"I really did enjoy that. I would try to throw in a little funny once and awhile just to see if people were listening. Dottie Cook had a birthday every game night for several years. Knowing the kids so well, it was fun to add their middle name or nickname at the game."

Tappan, who is currently the USD 416 assistant superintendent, worked as the LHS activities director and principal during many of Dennis' years in Louisburg and the two became quick

friends.

With that, Tappan is well aware of Dennis' work ethic and commitment to Louisburg athletics. In fact, he has seen it firsthand.



Doc D lets out a cheer on the sidelines following a big play during the Wildcats' 2010 state championship game.

"Most people know that Doc doesn't take vacations very often," Tappan said. "In fact, it usually takes a team of us to get him out of the office for more than a day. But in 2010, he and Karla scheduled a trip over Thanksgiving break to Chicago. Well, that was also the year of our run to the state football championship and there was no way he was going to miss it. In typical Doc D fashion, he lined things up to perfection. He takes a 5 a.m. flight from Chicago to Kansas City, has Karla drive him to the Legends off of I-70 and at about 6:30 I'm

picking him up and we beat the team to Salina. When the bus finally rolls in, he looks at Coach (Gary) Griffin with a grin and says, ‘What took you so long?’ About four hours later we were celebrating a championship.

“The commitment that Doc D has demonstrated over the years to the students of Louisburg schools is second to none. From the football sidelines on a Friday night in the fall, to being behind the mic in the LHS gym during basketball season, Doc always supported the students, the coaches and the administration of USD 416. I am proud to call Damon Dennis my friend.”

Beyond The Call of Duty

Running a business can be difficult enough, but when you have other responsibilities on top of all that, it can be stressful at times.

The coaches at Louisburg High School never got that when working with Doc D. Veteran and young coaches alike were amazed at the dedication he displayed.

“Doc D is one of the most honest and honorable men I have ever met,” Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. “He has donated countless hours and years for helping Louisburg student athletes. He always went out of his way to help anyone and everyone. He wasn’t always just helping players. He would always check in on the coaches as well – checking on their well-being, their teams, and their families.

“Doc always went out of his way to make someone feel important and special. He was NEVER too busy for anyone. He will be greatly missed and he is irreplaceable. Thank you Doc D for everything that you have done for my teams, my family and for myself. You are someone I am lucky enough to call a friend.”

That dedication would not only be found after school in the evenings, but even before the sun came up as well.



Doc D checks out Louisburg's Hallie Hutsell following an injury during last soccer season.

"Doc D will be greatly missed," Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment said. "He unselfishly devoted many hours to our athletes and was always a phone call or a text away. I can't count how many times he would meet myself and an athlete or two at the school at 5:30 a.m. prior to departure for a volleyball tournament. Not only was he a great role model and mentor for the athletes, but he served as a great mentor to a young coach for the past 14 years. He will be greatly missed by many."

However, where Dennis is most recognized was on the football sidelines. He did anything from tending to injured athletes, mentoring future trainers and handing out free food or candy to the student section before certain games.

It wasn't gone unnoticed as many around the school and

community know what Doc D has meant to the district.

“If Louisburg had a Mt. Rushmore, Damon would definitely be up there,” Louisburg graduate and longtime coach Jeff Lohse said. “Doc is one of the most selfless people that I know. He was always more than willing to help anyone out and never expected anything in return. I consider Doc to be a great friend of mine and this is definitely bittersweet. I wish him and Karla nothing but the best as they open up this new chapter in their lives. Damon will be missed but his legacy in Louisburg will live on forever.”

Dennis always made sure to welcome the new coaches to the district and made them feel a part of the family and that was the case with boys basketball coach Ty Pfannenstiel when he came to the school three years ago.



Doc D was presented with a team signed helmet following the team's award banquet two years ago.

"Doc D is the most selfless man I know," Pfannenstiel said. "What Doc gave to this school and community is unprecedented. He cared so much for all of our athletes, there's no way we are going to be able to replace what he brought to this school. I feel bad for whoever is going to come in and try to fill his shoes – he set the bar way too high."

Dennis has been on the sideline for many of Louisburg's greatest athletic achievements, including three state football appearances and has watched many athletes along the way achieve great individual accomplishments.

He knows that he has been blessed to be able to be a part of Wildcat athletics in one form or another the last 28 years.

“As for favorite memories, it is not always about the wins and losses,” Dennis said. “The things I have most enjoyed is the time spent with athletes and coaches. The things that go on in the locker room, before and after games were the fun part. I have had a behind the scenes view of some pretty amazing people.

“Obviously the 2010 state football championship is at the top of the list. We had gone to the championship twice and come home in second on two occasions. It was a great group to be around and a great experience. If I had to choose a group of kids that really stand out the most, it would be the seniors my first year here (class of 1993). They welcomed me with open arms and made me feel like I was appreciated. I still speak to members of that class often and consider them friends. It was a really special group. I also loved seeing kids accomplish their dreams of success. Louisburg has had its share of champions and athletes that have gone on to do some amazing things.”



Doc D was also good with equipment as he works on Madden Rutherford's helmet prior to a game.

In his last week at the office, Doc D has seen a lot of visitors that have come to thank him for everything he has done. Although Dennis won't be around as much as he used to, he wants people to know that this isn't a farewell – but more of a see you later.

"I want everyone to know how much I appreciate their kind words," Dennis said. "There has been talk of various activities surrounding my career change that have been proposed. While I genuinely appreciate this, I don't think I can handle the attention. My emotions have gotten the better of me and I am not sure that I can handle any celebrations publicly, unless everyone wants to see me cry.

"I am not going away. I just won't be at 11 South Broadway or at the high school every day. Thank you to everyone that has

supported me as I have made every effort to support my community.”

No, Doc – thank you…

LHS sports preparing to start back up in June with summer workouts



Kansas high school sports has been absent since the middle of March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but that all could change very soon.

During its board of directors meeting earlier this month, the Kansas State High School Activities Association made a change to its summer regulations. Starting on June 1, school employed coaches may begin summer programs as long as it is permitted by the community’s health authorities and the school district.

Coaches at Louisburg High School are making plans to move forward beginning the first of June, but they must meet some guidelines to do so.

In the first two calendar weeks in June, athletes will need to attend a conditioning session each day. Those must be completed to be able to participate in a coach’s camp or

organized competition.

If an athlete is playing football, they must complete an extra five days of conditioning before being able to participate in competition.

The first two weeks of conditioning sessions will not involve weights, indoor facilities or sporting equipment to ensure safety. Masks will be optional at workouts, but six feet of distance will be in place along with no more than the 90 gathering restriction under the phase 3 guidelines put out by the state.

Then on June 15, barring no setbacks, conditioning will include indoor weight sessions and indoor facilities will be allowed. Coaches will also be able to hold camps and competition throughout the summer.



Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein has plotted out summer workouts for his football team beginning with three weeks of conditioning starting June 1

“I think the guidelines were set to help ensure the safety of all student athletes accords the state, along with their physical health as well as the preparation for the season,” Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein said. “Challenges may be there, but overall they are irrelevant as all the teams in the state have to follow the same guidelines. Our school administrators have been very supportive throughout this process.”

Along with the new changes, KSHSAA also lifted the moratorium period at the end of the summer and will allow teams to practice all the way up to the beginning of the school year. Fall sports, however, will take precedence from Aug. 1 through Aug. 15.

For some programs, the changes won’t be much different as what they have experienced in the past, other than practicing social distancing through the first two weeks of conditioning.

“We are still allowed to compete in leagues and camps after all athletes have completed 10 days of conditioning/training,” Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment said. “Our summer weights program is changing some this summer, so it gives the players a chance to acclimate back into workouts before putting a ball in their hands.

“When you really look at the schedule, we lost the first two weeks in June (in terms of volleyball skill work), but we gained the moratorium week and have full contact until August 16. The fall season starts on August 17. Normally, we can’t have contact, outside of weights and conditioning, after mid-July. This actually gives us about four weeks on the back end of summer to work with the athletes.”



Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment has her normal summer scheduled planned out despite a different start.

Still, the new-look summer won't be without its challenges – especially in the first 10 days of the summer calendar. However, the coaches and athletes will gladly work around the new rules in order to get back together and competing again.

"I think the new guidelines will help kids get back to some normalcy as long as everything continues to get better, but the six feet of social distancing could be challenging when you are coaching a team sport," Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. "We will find a way to overcome these challenges and help the kids develop as much as possible."

Coaches have already altered their camp schedules for the summer, and that information, along with a list of camps, can be found here.

As for Louisburg cross country, the runners will also be going through a conditioning period like everyone else. They will meet at the football practice field at 7 a.m. for an hour every morning beginning June 1 and that will continue through the summer.

Since school has been out since the middle of March, coaches have tried to find a way to stay in touch with their players – and like with online schooling – the zoom platform has been a big help for coaches.

“Football has been doing online zoom workout together for those currently in high school every Monday, Wednesday and Friday while we have been out of school, so I have still been seeing them and they have been doing some cardio,” Ebenstein said. “We have as normal of a summer planned as possible. We will have our weights sessions, our team camp, review/skills night, and we will have our contact camp that KSHSAA is allowing.”

With everything going on around the state and the country, everything is still in limbo and dates could have to be altered once again depending on what local officials decide. Even with all that, the coaches believe there will be a fall season.



Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley has tried to keep many of his same events for both the boys and girls teams.

“I am confident our fall season will be played,” Conley said “It may have some things that are different, but we will play. I know that the boys are very anxious in having conversations with some of them.”

Many of the coaches and players are just ready to return to some kind of routine following the spread of COVID-19 and they hope sports can give that to them.

“As of right now, our season is scheduled, and we’ll plan accordingly if told differently,” Compliment said. “But for right now, (activities director Michael) Pickman has stressed that for most of the athletes, a return to summer weights/conditioning/activities will be their first taste of ‘normalcy.’ I’m excited to get back at it and see the athletes

and students again.”

Pickman named as new LHS activities director



Michael Pickman (left) was hired as Louisburg High School’s new activities director and assistant principal last week following the USD Board of Education meeting. Current Louisburg AD, Scott Hinkle (right), will move to the middle school to serve in the same capacity starting next school year.

Louisburg High School will have a little different look to its activities department for the 2020-21 school year.

Following the USD 416 Board of Education meeting on April 13, Michael Pickman was hired to serve as the school’s new assistant principal and activities director. Pickman will replace Scott Hinkle, who has been in that position for the last two years.

Hinkle will remain in the district and will move over to the middle school to serve in the same capacity.

“I had known for a while that I wanted to continue my education by getting a second master’s degree, but I didn’t really know which area,” Pickman said. “I talked with current

administration and was both inspired and encouraged to explore administrative leadership. This is the job I wanted because it meant staying in Louisburg and continuing to work with the staff and coaches who I know have, can and will achieve great things when it comes to our students and student athletes.

“We are a Louisburg family and I want my daughter in the Louisburg community and school system, so I wouldn’t have done this anywhere else. The atmosphere from district leadership to the building leadership is top notch and I am ready to grow as an educator and work alongside (principal) Jeremy (Holloway) and the administrative staff at the high school and the amazing coaches and support them.”

Pickman has taught English at the high school for the last seven years and has also worked in the Prairie View, West Franklin and Maur Hill Prep school districts.

He has also spent a lot of time in the athletic arena as he has served as the Wildcat boys and girls soccer assistant coach, alongside head coach Kyle Conley, for the last five-plus years.

“It will be tough to give up all aspects of it, but the magic of these soccer programs will be especially difficult,” Pickman said. “Kyle has been an amazing person to coach with and his passion is contagious. Getting to start the girls program with him and the immediate success has been amazing. State finals and big wins and the atmosphere – some don’t ever get to experience that – and lastly the players, both boys and girls who have graduated and those who remain to carry on the greatness are why I said yes to coaching. They make the whole experience amazing and fun.

“So it will be hard, but I would also not have gone anywhere else to do a different job and so I will still be able to support the soccer players and every other student and athlete through my new opportunity and to do so the Wildcat Way.”

As for Hinkle, he spent the last two years as the LHS activities director after coming from Liberal High School. He is excited that his new position at the middle school will allow him to spend more time with family.

“I really enjoyed my time at the high school, even though it was only two years,” Hinkle said. “I am leaving behind a great workplace with a great culture and an unbelievable staff. It was not an easy decision.

“I made the move to the middle school to get back some evenings and weekends. I have been an athletic director for 11 years at the high school level in my career, and I was ready to free up some time. I know I am joining another great staff at LMS, and look forward to the new challenge ahead of me.”

Dream becomes reality for White after signing with Northwest Missouri



Louisburg senior Brayden White signed his letter of intent to play college football at Northwest Missouri State earlier this month.

On Feb. 5, Brayden White made his
way to downtown Kansas City to join almost a million other

fans for a parade to
celebrate the Kansas City Chiefs' victory in the Super Bowl.

For most people, that would be the
highlight of their day – not Brayden's.

Earlier that morning, White made it official as he signed his letter of intent to play football at Northwest Missouri State on National Signing Day. He followed it up with a gathering of family and friends for a dinner and signing ceremony at Timbercreek later in the evening.

White's dream of playing college
football is now real.

"The recruiting process is something I really can't describe," White said. "It is very weird and it is very, very long and very, very hard. But finding the school that wants you is just an amazing feeling. When you find a school that is good like Northwest, and wins like Northwest, it is also something I was looking for.

"It definitely feels like it hasn't
happened yet. Once I get on campus and I am there, I think it will start to
feel more real. It feels great right now, but it hasn't set in yet. It has been
a real good day."

The Louisburg High School senior
began the recruiting process his freshman year and has traveled across the
country to different camps the last three years.

He made his way to camps at K-State,
KU, South Dakota and Air Force, just to name a few, and tried to get his name
out there as much as possible. It seemed to work as White had interest from

several area programs.

“It was real fun and I enjoyed every bit of it,” White said of the recruiting experience. “I started my freshman year with all the recruiting stuff and my dad and I did a bunch of research of when to start and what you are supposed to do. I started going to camps my freshman year as a nobody, and then started to pick up steam a little my sophomore year. My junior year, I think the season we had really helped with the senior class that we had and the undefeated league title. That honestly probably helped the most.

“I had a lot of favorite camps that I went to, but I never made it to a Northwest camp, but I wish I would have. They ended up seeing me at the K-State camp and I am lucky that they saw enough in me to offer me.”

Northwest Missouri State, which is a perennial national championship contender at the Division II level, made an offer to White that he couldn’t pass up – especially after taking his official visit on campus.

“It was definitely their style of play and the way they portray the team,” White said. “It is a family atmosphere and everyone has the same goal. Everyone wants to win and to do it together. That really stuck out to me and everything they have there from the way the coaches treat you, to the dorms, the other players and the facilities is just great. I would put them up against some Division I schools because they have such nice facilities. It is insane.”



Senior Brayden White held a signing ceremony on Feb. 5 at Timbercreek as he signed with Northwest Missouri in front of family and friends. Sitting next to Brayden (from left) is his mother Melissa, his brother Briggs, his sisters Pippy and Brielle and his father Nick.

White, who has earned All-Frontier League and all-state honors for his work on the offensive line, has played tackle for all of his high school career, but will be asked to move inside on the offensive line for the Bearcats – a challenge he is looking forward to taking on.

"The coaches have told me they would like to see me at guard or center," White said. "I am not quite tall enough to be a tackle, which is a little weird to me because I have always been one of the taller kids, but I am perfectly fine with being a guard. I think they saw my film from my junior year when I would pull from the tackle spot to the other side with Kiefer (Tucker) when we would run a

counter tray. They want
a guard that can pull and an athletic lineman on the inside."

Transitioning from high school
football to the college game is one that takes some time for a lot of athletes
to get accustomed to and a lot of freshman are asked to redshirt, but White is
ready to get to work with the Bearcats and compete for spot.

"They generally told most of us in
the class that we were going to be redshirted," White said. "They said there
could be a couple of us that get that third spot on the line. More than likely,
I will redshirt, but I am still going to go in and compete for that third or
second-string spot. If I can suit up my first year, that is definitely my goal."

Harding selected to play in Kansas Shrine Bowl



Louisburg senior Garrett Harding was recently selected to the Kansas Shrine Bowl.

When Garrett Harding received a

text from his coach Robert Ebenstein, he couldn’t believe what he what he was reading.

It delivered some unexpected – but welcome – news.

Harding was recently selected to play in the Kansas Shrine Bowl for the East side of the state after a strong season for the Louisburg football team. The game will take place on July 18 at Yager Stadium on the campus of Washburn University in Topeka.

“My first reaction when (coach) E texted me was my heart skipped a beat,” Harding said. “I felt a rush of adrenaline I used to get before every football game and it was like was back out on the field again. It is a tremendous honor for me to be selected to play with such talented athletes and representing the Louisburg community. I also would like to thank my parents, siblings, coaches, and teammates for supporting me and pushing me to be better every day.”

The Kansas Shrine Bowl is an all-star high school senior, East vs. West, football game put on each year in Kansas, by the Kansas Shrine. It is a 501(c) 3 non-profit charity that produces annual events and related activities, with net proceeds benefiting Shriners Hospitals for Children. The Kansas Shrine Bowl has sent over $2M to Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Notable alumni of the game include current Oakland Raiders All-Pro Wide Receiver Jordy Nelson, NFL Hall of Famer Barry Sanders, former Kansas State and Kansas City Chiefs Linebacker Gary Spani, former Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year and Super Bowl Champion Linebacker Mark Simoneau and many others.

Harding had a big year for the Wildcats on both sides of the ball. The Louisburg senior was named to the All-Frontier League first team as an offensive lineman after he helped the Wildcats amass 2,822 yards of offense, including more than 2,100 yards on the ground.

He was also named an all-league defensive second team player. He was second on the team with 65 tackles on the season, including 12 solo stops.

The Topeka Capital-Journal also named Harding to the Class 4A all-state first team.

The opportunity to play in the annual Kansas all-star is one Harding is not about to pass up. He will get to play along with some of the best senior players across the state.

“The thing I’m most looking forward to during the Shrine Bowl is playing some of my friends that I used to play with on other teams like Gardner and the Topeka Crush,” Harding said. “Also, I’m looking forward to showing my talents and heart out on the

field again,
representing the best of our state.”

Vance earns All-MIAA honors at Pittsburg State



Pittsburg State center Anders Vance recently earned All-MIAA recognition following his performance with the Gorillas this past season.

In his first year starting for the
Pittsburg State football team on a full-time basis, Anders Vance certainly made
his mark on the Gorilla offensive line.

Vance, a 2016 Louisburg High
School graduate, was named to the All-MIAA honorable mention team as he was one
of 17 Gorillas to be given postseason honors when the list was released late
last month.

“It was an incredible to earn that
honor,” Vance said. “I would not have been able to receive that honor without
the amazing athletes that were playing at my side this season.”

Vance, who played center for the Gorillas, helped Pitt State accumulate 466 total yards a contest as it averaged nearly 41 points a game. Pitt State finished the season with a 6-5 record.

It has been a long road for the Pitt State junior, but it all seems to be paying off. After redshirting his freshman year, Vance saw action in five games in a reserve role last season, before taking the starting job in 2019 and he never let it go.

"It was awesome to be able represent Pitt State this season as a starter, and it wouldn't have happened without my coaches and teammates pushing and believing me," Vance said. "On the season, I played to the best of my ability and tried to do my job every play. That was the mindset the whole o-line had. We trusted each other to do our jobs every play and it was smooth running for the most part up front."

Vance was a fixture on the offensive line for Louisburg as well as he was an all-league and all-state selection his senior season. He was also named to the 2016 Kansas Shrine Bowl.

There will be some changes within the Gorilla program next season as they look for a new head coach, but Vance is looking forward to one more final year no matter who is leading the team.

"This upcoming season is going to be exciting," Vance said. "I look

forward to
getting into off-season training with my team and seeing us all grow in strength
and speed, and to see what we can put on the field next year and what damage we
can do.”

Wildcats earn 11 spots on all-league football team



Louisburg seniors Garrett Harding (left) and Madden Rutherford earned first team All-Frontier League selections and the Wildcats were named to 11 spots overall.

Louisburg had an up and down 2019
campaign as the Wildcats had to deal with injury after injury, not to mention a
difficult Frontier League schedule.

Still, the Wildcats finished their season with a 6-4 record and a spot in the regional playoffs. Louisburg had plenty of key pieces help the Wildcats in their run and those players were rewarded for their efforts when the All-Frontier League team was recently released.

Louisburg earned a combined 11
spots on the all-league squad, including a pair of first-team

selections.

“The Frontier League is always tough, and this year was no different,” Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. “All of the newly added schools had some of their best seasons – Tongie, Bonner and Piper. Then you throw in an undefeated Paola team and a very solid Spring Hill team and us. Then you look at the talent that Eudora, Baldwin and Ottawa all have, and it is a very tough league. So, considering all those things I think we came out pretty well.”

Senior quarterback Madden Rutherford and senior offensive lineman Garrett Harding were each named to the All-Frontier League first team offense after successful seasons.

Rutherford finished the year with 671 yards passing with eight touchdowns and he also added 245 yards on the ground and four more scores. Harding was fixture on the offensive line as the Wildcats amassed 2,822 total yards of offense, including more than 2,100 yards on the ground.

“Very excited to see first team honors for Madden and Garrett as both players were totally deserving of it and it is really cool to see the other league coaches felt the same way,” Ebenstein said. “The system is very tough, especially for the skill guys. There are only three first teamers for “skill” which is quarterbacks and running backs combined.

“To

see Madden break first team was a testament to his competitiveness and same
with Garrett. If he didn’t have his injury last year, Garrett is probably first
team as a junior, but to see if pay off for him as a senior is really
cool. I am very happy for both of them.”



(From left) Ben Wiedenmann, Brayden White and Andy Hupp were each named to the all-league second team.

Senior lineman Brayden White was
selected to the second team offense, as was junior running back Ben Wiedenmann.
Junior Andy Hupp was named to the second team offense as a multi-purpose player
after he saw time at quarterback, running back and on the offensive line.

Wiedenmann led the team in rushing
with 1,126 yards on the ground and another 86 yards receiving. He finished the
season with 13 total touchdowns.

White, who started the season at
tackle, joined Harding in blocking for the Wildcats’ 2,800-plus yards of

offense. Hupp also did some of that blocking, but filled in at different
positions for the Wildcats as he finished the year with two touchdowns and 200
yards of total offense.

“The voting for our league is tough, and
with so many quality teams in the Frontier League this year spots are limited,”
Ebenstein said. “But Brayden, Andy and Ben were all deserving of first team
honors, but to be second team in the Frontier League is a tremendous honor.”

Harding was the lone player on the
all-league second team defense as he earned spots on both sides of the ball for
the Wildcats. He was second on the team with 65 tackles, including 12 solo
stops.



Weston Guetterman (left) and Drake Varns were named to the all-league honorable mention team.

White was named to the honorable mention defensive line and Hupp was selected as an honorable mention linebacker. Hupp led Louisburg with 74 tackles on the season, including five for a loss and two sacks. White ended the year with 44 stops, two sacks, two batted balls and a fumble recovery.

Junior receiver Weston Guetterman was put on the honorable mention offensive squad. Guetterman led the Wildcats with 392 yards receiving to go along with three touchdowns.

Senior Drake Varns was also named to the honorable mention squad as a kicker, while Rutherford was selected as an honorable mention all-league punter. Varns was 21 of 26 in extra point tries and 3 of 5 on field goal attempts.

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL

OFFENSE

First Team

LINEMEN – **Garrett Harding, Louisburg, senior**; Cole Sample, Tonganoxie, senior; Willie Harris, Tonganoxie, senior; Clay Essex, Paola, senior; Mikey Stribling, Paola, senior

BACKS – **Madden Rutherford, Louisburg, senior**; Cooper Cunningham, Tonganoxie, senior; Connor Hasz, Paola, senior

RECEIVERS – Armani Washington, Bonner Springs, senior; Elijah Tyner, Tonganoxie, senior; Conner Searcy, Tonganoxie, senior; Jack Robinson, Piper, senior

MULTI-PURPOSE – LaJames White,

Piper, junior

KICKER – Ryan Wokutch, Paola,
senior

Second Team

LINEMEN – Tony Caballero, Bonner Springs, sophomore; Jacob Peterson, Bonner Springs, senior; **Brayden White, Louisburg, senior**; Aron Dominick, Spring Hill, senior; Javier Castillo, Paola, senior

BACKS – **Ben Wiedenmann, Louisburg, junior**; Conner Quick, Baldwin, senior; Blake Poje, Tonganoxie, junior

RECEIVERS – Rishaud Dockery,
Bonner Springs, senior; Gage Klutts, Spring Hill, senior; Gavin Lang, Baldwin,
junior

MULTI-PURPOSE – **Andy Hupp, Louisburg, junior**

KICKER – Bear Gardner, Spring Hill,
senior

Honorable Mention

LINEMEN – Travis Bohnenblust,
Eudora, junior; Chris Husling, Eudora, senior; Michael Sheldon, Bonner Springs,
senior; Denver Gardner, Spring Hill, junior; Alex Berg, Baldwin, senior; Bailey
Vesco, Baldwin, senior; Andrew Jarvis, Piper, junior; Cam Beebe, Piper,
freshman; Carter Stanchfield, Paola, junior

BACKS – Cael Lynch, Eudora, junior;
Brayden Beerbower, Eudora, sophomore; Bryce Krone, Bonner Springs, senior;
Corbyn Meyers, Spring Hill, senior; Zade Barker, Spring Hill,

senior; Trysten
Heck, Baldwin, senior; Garrett Williams, Paola, junior

RECEIVERS – Silas Etter, Eudora, sophomore; **Weston Guetterman, Louisburg, junior**; Dallas Bond, Tonganoxie, junior; Evan Phillips, Paola, senior

MULTI-PURPOSE – Sloan Hayden,
Eudora, senior; Daidrien Aho, Ottawa, senior; Ethan Byers, Bonner Springs,
senior

KICKER – Zach Reno, Bonner Springs, junior; **Drake Varns, Louisburg, senior**; Matt Garber, Baldwin, senior; Javier Trujillo, Tonganoxie, senior

DEFENSE

First Team

LINEMEN – Carson Downes, Spring
Hill, senior; Cole Sample, Tonganoxie, senior; Dallas Bond, Tonganoxie, junior;
Clay Essex, Paola, senior; Javier Castillo, Paola, senior

LINEBACKERS – Bryce Krone, Bonner
Springs, senior; Branden Martin, Piper, junior; Mikey Stribling, Paola, senior;
Evan Peuser, Paola, senior

BACKS – Ethan Byers, Bonner
Springs, senior; Ethan Phillips, Paola, senior; Connor Hasz, Paola, senior

MULTI-PURPOSE – Brandon Sanders,
Bonner Springs, junior

PUNTER – Johnny Tapia, Bonner
Springs, senior

Second Team

LINEMEN – Tony Caballero, Bonner Springs, sophomore; Michael Sheldon, Bonner Springs, senior; **Garrett Harding, Louisburg, senior**; Trysten Heck, Baldwin, senior; Lance Bassett, Piper, freshman

LINEBACKERS – Jakob Stovall,
Spring Hill, senior; Conner Searcy, Tonganoxie, senior; Dustin Rhoads,
Tonganoxie, senior; Anthony Ferguson, Piper, junior

BACKS – Daidrien Aho, Ottawa,
senior; Jaden Robinson, Bonner Springs; Cooper Cunningham, Tonganoxie, senior;
Garrett Williams, Paola, junior

MULTI-PURPOSE – Heston Robbins,
Tonganoxie, junior

PUNTER – Logan Greenhalgh, Spring
Hill, senior

Honorable Mention

LINEMEN – Will Schreiner, Eudora, junior; Darrell Higgins, Eudora, junior; Jacob Peterson, Bonner Springs, senior; **Brayden White, Louisburg, senior**; Aron Dominick, Spring Hill, senior; Cade Grossoehme, Baldwin; Toby Thomas, Baldwin, junior; Caleal Kennedy, Piper, junior; Mason Talcott, Paola, senior; Jake Karr, Paola, junior

LINEBACKERS – Cael Lynch, Eudora, junior; Carnelle Wehrhan, Bonner Springs, senior; **Andy Hupp, Louisburg, junior**; Wyatt Dickie, Spring Hill, senior; Jackson Raunenzahn, Spring Hill, senior; Alex Berg, Baldwin, senior; Gavin Lang, Baldwin, junior; Jackson Earlywine, Paola, junior

BACKS – Rishaud Dockery, Bonner
Springs, senior; Dom Scheerer, Spring Hill, senior; Jacob Maxwell, Tonganoxie,

junior; Branden Snell, Piper, junior; Tyson Latner, Piper, senior

MULTI-PURPOSE – Jake Boucher,
Eudora, senior; Shane Doty, Baldwin, junior; Darius McNeal, Piper, junior

PUNTER – Brett Breedlove, Eudora, senior; **Madden Rutherford, Louisburg, senior**; Garrett Williams, Paola, junior

---

Banged up Wildcats fall to Chanute in regional playoffs



Louisburg senior Garrett Harding brings down a Chanute running back during the Wildcats' regional playoff game Friday in Chanute.

CHANUTE – The Louisburg football
team tried to hold it together as long as it could, but on Friday in Chanute,
the Wildcats just didn't have enough left in the tank.

Louisburg, a team that has been
decimated by injuries the last few weeks, came up just short in the regional
round of the Class 4A state playoffs with a 30-21 loss to Chanute and the

Wildcats saw their season come to an end with a 6-4 record.

Quarterback Madden Rutherford had a broken thumb and was relegated to wide receiver and punter. Linebacker Andy Hupp was very limited on how much he could go and senior Charlie Koontz played only defense due to a lingering injury.

The Wildcats saw their offensive line depth tested in recent weeks with the loss of center Ian McGuire, while other players, including freshman backup center J.R. Rooney also played through injury.

Junior running back Ben Wiedenmann, who carried the Wildcats with 198 yards on the ground and three touchdowns, could hardly walk by the time the game was finished. Several other Wildcats also sat out or played with injury, forcing the Wildcats coaches to do a lot of last-minute shuffling.

“The kids showed a lot of heart, especially when you look at who was injured,” Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. “Our quarterback, Madden, was injured and our quarterback on defense, Hupp, who is our middle linebacker, was also injured and could hardly go. If Charlie was most kids, he wouldn’t have played at all and has been injured all week. Ben can barely walk, then Ian and Jay (Scollin) were already out coming in, as were Dominic (Owens), Aiden (Barker) and A.J. (Reed). I can’t doubt our kids for a second. They have been working their butts off and really played hard and gave it all they had.”

With all the injuries, Ebenstein implemented a new offense

prior to the Chanute game. Junior receiver Weston Guetterman took over quarterback duties with Rutherford and Hupp, the back-up quarterback, both unable to take snaps.



Sophomore Brandon Doles jumps through a hole in the line created (from left) by Brayden White, Garrett Harding and JR Rooney.

The Wildcats ran the wishbone and
Guetterman did a lot of handing off to Wiedenmann, Brandon Doles and Kolby
Kattau. For the most part it worked for Louisburg, as it racked 259 yards on the
ground and the Wildcats got out to an 8-0 lead in the first quarter after an
18-yard run and 2-point conversion from Wiedenmann.

Louisburg got a good push from its

offensive line of Brayden White, Garrett Harding, JR Rooney, Andrew Krause and Sam Kratochvil, along with tight end Michael Waldron.

Although the Wildcats got out to a good start, Chanute battled back and eventually took the lead on a pair of touchdown passes from quarterback Ty Bowman in the second quarter to put the Blue Comets up 14-8.

That second touchdown pass came on fourth down with 28 seconds left in the first half when Bowman found an open receiver for a 28-yard score.

Chanute got the ball to start the second half and added another score to go up 20-8 and put the Wildcats in a deep hole.

“It looked good, and it worked, just not good enough,” Ebenstein said of the offense. “It was what we thought it would be. It isn’t the best offense to have when you are trying to come back from two possessions down. We did all we could.”

Louisburg continued to battle as it drove down the field and Wiedenmann scored on a 1-yard touchdown run with 50 seconds left in the third and trailed just 20-14.

Chanute added a 32-yard field goal in the fourth to go up nine, but Guetterman returned the kickoff to near midfield to give Louisburg good field position and it took advantage. Wiedenmann ran right through the Blue Comet defense for a 46-yard score, and after a Drake Varns extra point, the Wildcats trailed 23-21.



Ben Wiedenmann stiff-arms a Chanute defender for a long run Friday. Wiedenmann finished the night with three touchdowns and 198 yard on the ground.

“Ben is a monster,” Ebenstein said. “He was nowhere near 100 percent and he was limping around all week. Then he took a helmet on the thigh again, but he just kept going. He is a freak athlete and he ran hard all night.”

Unfortunately for the Wildcats, the Blue Comets found the endzone one more time to go back up nine and Louisburg didn’t have enough left for another comeback.

Defensively, the Wildcats were able to slow the Blue Comets down at times despite the

injuries. Senior Garrett
Harding recorded a team-high 10 tackles and junior Justin Collins was second
with eight. Doles and senior Michael Waldron added seven and six tackles,
respectively.



Junior Konnor Vohs makes a tackle on a Chanute receiver Friday during the Wildcats' regional playoff game.

The loss also meant the final time on the sideline for seniors White, Kratochvil, Krause, Varns, Harding, Ian McGuire, Rutherford, Waldron and Koontz as the Wildcats begin to prepare for next year.

"It is always a great season when
you are in the playoffs," Ebenstein said. "It is the best time of the year. We

are going to give them a couple weeks off and then we will start up with winter
weights and do it again. These kids are all like family to me, and any week we
can continue with them, is a blessing. Unfortunately it all has to come to an
end, but I really enjoyed my time with them.”

LOU	**8**	**0**	**6**	**7 – 21**
CHA	**0**	**14**	**6**	**10 – 30**

SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

L: Ben Wiedenmann 18 run
(Wiedenmann run)

Second quarter

C: Garrett Almond 16 pass from Ty
Bowman (run failed)

C: Briley Peavy 28 pass from
Bowman (Bowman run)

Third quarter

C: Bowman 1 run (kick failed)

L: Wiedenmann 1 run (kick failed)

Fourth quarter

C: 32-yard FG

L: Wiedenmann 46 run (Drake Varns
kick)

C: Peavy 2 run (kick good)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Ben Wiedenmann 24-198, Brandon
Doles 8-30, Kolby Kattau 6-23, Weston Guetterman 5-8

TACKLES – Garrett Harding 10,
Justin Collins 8, Brandon Doles 7, Michael Waldron 6, Ben Wiedenmann 5, Andy
Hupp 4, Brayden White 3, Andrew Krause 3, Konnor Vohs 3, Weston Guetterman 2,
Kolby Kattau 2, Madden Rutherford 1, Drake Varns 1, Eli Johnson 1, JR Rooney 1.