## Tonganoxie ruins Wildcats' home opener



Louisburg's (from left) Eli Johnson, Konnor Vohs and Garrett Harding team up to stop a Tonganoxie player at the goal line and force a fumble Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

It wasn't the way the Louisburg football wanted to kick off its home schedule Friday against Tonganoxie.

Tonganoxie took advantage of some Wildcat mistakes and racked up nearly 500 yards of total offense as it handed Louisburg a 42-6 loss at Wildcat Stadium.

The Chieftains were the more physical team as they won the battle up front and put together several hard hits on the Wildcat players.

"Tonganoxie is very good," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "My hats off to them. They played a complete, physical four-quarter game. They are best public school that I have seen in a long time. They are legit."

Louisburg (0-2) had to face obstacles throughout the game, including losing players to injury, and it challenged their depth. Running backs Charlie Koontz and Jay Scollin had to leave the game

with injuries, as did quarterback Madden Rutherford.

The Chieftains' defense held

Louisburg to just 175 total yards of offense and forced two turnovers. Even

with all that, the Wildcats trailed just 21-6 at halftime.

"They really didn't let us do a

whole lot," Ebenstein said of Tonganoxie. "Then on top of it we lose two

starting running backs and our quarterback to injury, and at that point, we

were just going to take what we could get. I am really proud of our kids. They

fought hard and they never tucked their tails. They didn't quit and they fought

their butts off and I am proud of them for that."

Tonganoxie (2-0) opened the game

with a 79-yard drive that ended in a 2-yard touchdown, and after the Wildcats

were forced to punt on their opening possession, the Chieftains drove down the

field once again. Except this time, the Wildcat defense forced Tonganoxie to  $% \left( 1\right) =\left( 1\right) +\left( 1\right$ 

turn the ball over on downs in the red zone.



Jay Scollin (33) and Justin Collins break up a Tonganoxie pass in the endzone Friday.

As it turned out, it was only a minor victory for Louisburg as Tonganoxie put together another possession that ended on a 5-yard score from Elijah Tyner and went up 14-0 late in the first quarter.

Louisburg had an answer as the Wildcats put together a drive of their own that ended with an 8-yard touchdown pass to Ben Wiedenmann from Rutherford. Wiedenmann also had a big game on the ground for Louisburg as he carried the ball 13 times for 103 yards.

The Chieftains stopped any kind of momentum the Wildcats put together as they scored on their next possession to go up 21-6. Tonganoxie looked to increase its lead even more before halftime, but the Wildcat defense had other answers.

The Wildcats forced two turnovers as Weston Guetterman recovered a fumble near the goal line. Then shortly before halftime, Michael Waldron intercepted a pass to keep the deficit at 15 points.



Louisburg's Brandon Doles (8) and A.J. Reed team up for a tackle Friday against Tonganoxie.

Andy Hupp was all over the field

for the Wildcat defense as the junior linebacker recorded a team-high 16

tackles, including six solo stops. Hupp then came in the game at quarterback in

the second half for Rutherford.

"Andy has taken minimal reps at

quarterback, but he is just a football player and he will do anything we ask of

him," Ebenstein said. "Andy is just a stud and he played well

for us."

Justin Collins and Brandon Doles

were next on the team with seven tackles each, while Guetterman, Garrett

Harding and Wiedenmann each added six.

Louisburg will try for its first

win of the season Friday when they travel to Baldwin. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

on the campus of Baker University.

"We have a winning culture here,

so anytime you lose it is tough on the guys," Ebenstein said. "At the end of

the day, these guys are doing what we ask of them. They are lining up every

play and getting to where they need to be. We talk to them about life skills

and we tell them that sometimes in life you don't get lucky breaks all the time

and it is all about how you respond. Our kids responded and kept fighting. We

are going to go to practice and get better and get ready for Baldwin."

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#### **SCORING SUMMARY**

#### FIRST QUARTER

T: Sam Kleidosty 2 run (Javier Trujillo kick)

T: Elijah Tyner 5 run (Trujillo kick)

#### **SECOND QUARTER**

L: Ben Wiedenmann 8 pass from
Madden Rutherford (extra point failed)

T: Cooper Cunningham 16 pass from Blake Poje (Trujillo kick)

#### THIRD QUARTER

T: Tyner 9 run (Trujillo kick)

#### FOURTH QUARTER

T: Cunningham 2 run (Trujillo kick)

T: Devyn Splichal run (Mendoza kick)

#### **STATISTICS**

RUSHING: Ben Wiedenmann 13-103;

Madden Rutherford 9-8

PASSING: Madden Rutherford

7-19-73-1

RECEIVING: Ben Wiedenmann 4-23; Weston

Guetterman 2-23; Charlie Koontz 1-21; Michael Waldron 1-6

# Frontier League sends proposal to KSHSAA to separate private schools



A big change to the Kansas High School

Activities Association (KSHSAA) postseason could be coming sooner rather than

later if a proposal, submitted by the Frontier League, passes the KSHSAA Board

of Directors and its member schools.

Last month the Frontier League,

led by Paola High School principal Jeff Hines and Louisburg superintendent Dr.

Brian Biermann, petitioned KSHSAA to separate public and private schools into

their own postseason competitions.

In order for it pass, the petition

must be signed by 20 percent of the 355 member schools according to KSHSAA

bi-laws. The Frontier League got the 71 needed petitions and have now submitted

this to appear in front of the KSHSAA Board of Directors for vote in their

Sept. 18 meeting.

The board of directors would then have to pass it by simple majority of those in attendance to

bring the proposal to a vote from all the member schools.

"Kansas needs to catch up with

the rest of the country and get this competitive imbalance under control in our

state," Hines said. "The longer we wait then more students will be negatively

impacted. We have a responsibility as educators to create the best

opportunities possible for our students. No one can honestly say we have

the best system possible right now. It can definitely be improved."

The proposal submitted by the Frontier League is the same one the state of Texas uses that keeps the schools in their same classification, but only separates the schools come postseason.

Other options were discussed

before submitting the proposal, such as implementing a multiplier on all

private schools like Missouri currently does. In fact, it is the most popular

proposal among the schools that were surveyed by Hines last January.

They also talked about the "Oklahoma

model" where schools are bumped up a classification based on success for

competitive balance.

Seventy-four percent of the

schools said they would support a population multiplier, 64 percent would

support competitive balance factors and 51 percent would support separate

divisions.

However, KSHSAA would not be able

to make this change with a multiplier due to state statute K.S.A. 72-130 that

states a high school association "must establish a system of classification of

member high schools according to student attendance."

KSHSAA would not be able to pass a

new bi-law that goes against state statute, and therefore, the Kansas State

Legislature would have reword the statue to allow the association to make those changes.

The Frontier League believes the Texas model, or separate postseason divisions, does not deal with classifications. Also, this model had more support from 5A and 6A schools as neither classification would likely vote for a multiplier.

"We don't view that as a classification decision as we are not affecting classification, but KSHSAA and their lawyers view that it is," Biermann said. "5A and 6A schools that we talked to really wanted us to push for the Texas model because they don't want to play them (private schools) either. The biggest thing for me is if 5 and 6A schools don't want to play them, then why do we? As a superintendent, I am supposed to create opportunities for kids. We had four teams last year in both soccer teams, football and volleyball that all saw their season end to Bishop Miege. It is not right that we have kids and coaches that work their tails off and they don't have the opportunity to win.

"Am I all about state

championships? Absolutely not. But we also know the reality of it in the

current system. Winning state championships is important for

communities and is

always a goal. I am not ever going to give up on this idea and neither will the Frontier League."

The public versus private school

debate has been going on for the last several years and Hines has been leading

the charge since 2015 when he put together a study that displayed the disparity

of state championships won by private schools.

In 2018-19, private schools won 32

percent of the state championships in Classes 5A through 1A. There are currently

no private schools in 6A. Twenty-one of those 24 state titles were won by

private schools in Class 4A and 5A.

That is a high number considering

that out of the 355 member schools, only 27 of them are private.

The Frontier League wanted to see change, so Hines surveyed the 355 member schools late last year and presented his findings to KSHSAA in January. More than 88 percent of the schools responded, that included 22 private institutions, and 87 percent said they want the current system changed.

#### Presentation of Public/Private School Survey Results

#### to The KSHSAA Executive Board

January 10, 2019

#### **Results from Survey**

313 of the 355 KSHSAA Member Schools Responded - 88.2%

291 Public Schools Responded

22 Private Schools Responded

273 Member Schools voted YES to support a change in the current structure

271 Public Schools Voted Yes for Change

2 Private Schools Voted for Change

40 Member Schools voted NO to support a change in the current structure

20 Public Schools Voted No for Change

20 Private Schools Voted No for Change

87.2% voted that they want the current system changed.

	Survey Response Rate	<b>Support Change</b>
1A	82.9%	92.8%
2A	89.0%	84.2%
3A	98.4%	85.6%
4A	100.0%	88.9%
5A	88.8%	81.3%
6A	77.7%	82.1%
Total	88.2%	87.2%

#### **School Superintendent Response Rate**

175 School Superintendents Responded

169 out of 175 Support Change

96.6% Support Change

#### **Principal Response Rate**

182 Principals Responded

84.6% Support Change

#### **Activities Director Response Rate**

200 Activities Directors Responded

85% Support Change

Although most schools said they would support the multiplier model more, Hines and the rest of the league schools, believe it is the best way to proceed at this time.

#### "Our

survey indicated that separate divisions was the least popular option among

member schools, however as a league we feel like it is the most appropriate

option," Hines said. "A multiplier will pass through and will be our next

option if this does not go through. A multiplier will impact many private

schools that are not quasi sports academies that are not very successful in athletics. The

separate divisions avoids this situation."

#### Ιf

the proposal does pass the board of directors, KSHSAA will then put it to a

vote with all 355 member schools and it must pass by a simple majority and by

four of the six classes.

#### From

there, KSHSAA executive director Bill Faflick would take it to the Kansas

Legislature before change could be implemented.

#### "We

know it won't happen overnight," Biermann said. "Even if this passes, nothing

will change this year and probably not the following year. It could be three

years out with the way football schedules take shape. We are honestly ok with

that if we knew that there was light at the end of the tunnel. If this would

not pass, we would turn right around and do the multiplier one."

Despite what happens at the

upcoming board of directors meeting, Hines believes changes to the system will

happen sooner rather than later.

"I am now confident something will get done," Hines said. "I think it will ultimately take a multiplier to get something done. If the

separate divisions fails then we will propose a multiplier for the spring board of directors meeting."

A lot of obstacles are still in the way for change to happen, whether it has to deal with state statues or member votes, but none of the schools in the nine-member Frontier League are going to stop until they see a more even playing field.

"I am very proud of the Frontier League, and even though we compete against each other, we are very unified on this," Biermann said. "It is about fairness and equality and I am tired of having my kids at Louisburg High School not having the same opportunity as some others. The throttle is down and it is going to stay down."

## Late comeback falls short in Wildcats' loss to Spring Hill



Louisburg junior Ben Wiedenmann breaks through the line for a

### long run during the Wildcats' season opener Friday in Spring Hill.

SPRING HILL - Four yards.

That is how far away the Louisburg football team was from completing what was already an impeccable comeback in its season opener Friday against Spring Hill.

Down three points with 50 seconds left, the Wildcats had a first and goal from the 4-yard line and were ready to steal the road win. Fate had other ideas, however.

Two penalties and two incompletions later, the Wildcats were forced to try a game-tying field goal. The kick fell short and Spring Hill survived a 27-24 contest that could have easily gone different way after Louisburg scored 18 unanswered points to tie it.

"Losing sucks, that is for sure," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "We had every chance to win it. The game really wasn't lost at the end, the game was lost in the first half and I was glad to see us battle back like we did. I was very pleased with how they fought.

"We had chances to make plays.

Sometimes you make them and sometimes you don't. There was a big learning curve

for us, and unfortunately some of the plays we learned on were scores for them."

Spring Hill jumped out quickly as the Broncos scored the game's first 10 points before the Wildcats battled back early in the second quarter.

Louisburg drove 80 yards and ended

with a 1-yard touchdown run from quarterback Madden Rutherford, and after a

missed extra point, the Wildcats trailed by just four.

Unfortunately for the Wildcats,

Spring Hill's offense was difficult to get off the field as the Broncos engineered

two more scoring drives. Bronco running back Zade Barker scored on pair of

4-yard runs to go up 24-6 with under two minutes left in the first half.

"We had a lot of kids making first

starts out there on defense and we really weren't assignment sound," Ebenstein

said. "That is something we might have taken for granted the last couple of

years because we had kids who knew where to be and what to do. We will learn,

coach them up and be better next game."

The Wildcats did take some momentum going into halftime as Rutherford led the Wildcats down the field and completed the drive with a 23-yard touchdown pass to Charlie Koontz with 24 seconds remaining.

After halftime, the Wildcats dominated time of possession.

Louisburg ate up the first nine

minutes of the third quarter, which ended in a 36-yard field goal from Drake

Varns. The Wildcat defense then forced a three-and-out, and got the ball right

back. In all, Spring Hill ran just 15 plays from scrimmage the entire second half.

"Keeping our defense fresh and

their quarterback off the field was big for us," Ebenstein said.



Junior Weston Guetterman hauls in one of his eight catches on Friday. Guetterman had a career-best 184 yards receiving.

Late in the third quarter, and

with Louisburg facing a third-and-long situation, Rutherford connected with

junior Weston Guetterman on a 35-yard pass play to the Spring Hill 21-yard

line. Then on the opening play of the fourth quarter, junior Justin Collins

found a hole and scored on a 21-yard touchdown run to tie the game.

Spring Hill kicker Bear Gardner put the Broncos in front again with a 27-yard field goal with

5 minutes and 49 seconds left in the contest.

The Wildcats had their backs

against wall, yet again, late in the fourth quarter as they faced a  $4^{\text{th}}$ 

down and 22. Rutherford again came through as he found running back Ben

Wiedenmann on a 32-yard pass over the middle for a first down.

All that set up the first-and-goal

from the 4-yard line, which would be as close as the Wildcats would get. An

illegal procedure penalty, two incompletions and a delay of game stymied the Louisburg drive.

"We had every intention of coming

back and winning that game," Ebenstein said. "We had the ball on our fingertips

twice in the endzone to win it, and then we had a good snap, good hold on the

field goal but the kick just didn't go through. We will learn from this and get better."



Junior linebacker Andy Hupp brings down a Spring Hill player for a loss Friday.

Louisburg also had several players

who were cramping up throughout the game, which forced players to play in

different spots at times and limited the Wildcats on what they could do late in the game.

One of those was Rutherford, who

despite the cramping issues, completed 12 of 27 passes for 251 yards and a

touchdown. His favorite target was Guetterman, who had his best day in a

Wildcat uniform with eight catches for 184 yards. Guetterman made several key

catches late in the contest to keep drives alive.

"Both of those guys are talented,

and with our running backs cramping up and everyone shuffling through, they

were two of the consistent players for us," Ebenstein said. "They knew their

assignments. Madden was really hindered because he couldn't roll out, and if he

tried to, he would cramp up. Still, those two made some big plays for us.

"We have to take better care of

our bodies and it seemed like every player was cramping out there. We were

shuffling kids in and out that don't play the right positions. We will take

care of our bodies, learn and get better for next week."

In the backfield, Wiedenmann led

the Louisburg rushing attack with 81 yards on 15 carries and the offensive line

of Brayden White, Garrett Harding, Ian McGuire, Andy Hupp, Eli Johnson and

tight end Michael Waldron helped open holes for some of the big plays.

Defensively, Hupp led the way with

a team-high eight tackles from his linebacker spot and sophomore Kolby Kattau

finished with seven. Wiedenmann and Waldron both added six tackles, while

Wiedenmann recorded a sack and two tackles for a loss.

The Wildcats will try and rebound

this Friday when they host Tonganoxie in their home opener. Kickoff is set for

7 p.m. at Wildcat Stadium.

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#### First quarter

SH: Gage Klutts 26 pass from

Corbyn Meyers (Bear Gardner kick)

SH: Gardner 26 FG

#### Second quarter

L: Madden Rutherford 1 run (kick failed)

SH: Zade Barker 4 run (Gardner kick)

SH: Barker 4 run (Gardner kick)

L: Charlie Koontz 23 pass from Rutherford (Rutherford run)

#### Third quarter

L: Drake Varns 36 FG

#### Fourth quarter

L: Justin Collins 21 run (Varns kick)

SH: Gardner 27 FG

#### **STATISTICS**

RUSHING - Ben Wiedenmann 15-81;

Madden Rutherford 11-37; Charlie Koontz 8-37; Justin Collins

3-31; Kolby Kattau

6-15; Jay Scollin 1-3

PASSING — Madden Rutherford 12-27-251

RECEIVING — Weston Guetterman

8-184; Ben Wiedenmann 1-32; Charlie Koontz 1-23; Jay Scollin

1-7; Michael

Waldron 1-5

TACKLES — Andy Hupp 8; Kolby

Kattau 7; Ben Wiedenmann 6; Michael Waldron 6; Brayden White

5; Justin Collins

4; Charlie Koontz 4; Andrew Krause 3; Weston Guetterman 2; Jay

Scollin 2;

Konnor Vohs 1; Drake Varns 1; A.J. Reed 1

## Wildcat football ready to defend Frontier League title



Louisburg quarterback Madden Rutherford hands the ball off to junior Ben Wiedenmann during a workout over the summer. The Wildcats open their season Friday at Spring Hill.

It was one of those special years for Louisburg football that doesn't come along very often.

The Wildcats won their first 10 games in 2018, captured a Frontier League title and finished with a regional

championship, before defending state champion Bishop Miege came calling and ended the Wildcats' season.

Last year may be hard to

replicate, especially after losing 18 seniors, but the Wildcats have the pieces

to make a lot of noise in the Frontier League once again.

Louisburg has close to 70 players

out this season, which is the most since head coach Robert Ebenstein has been

involved with the program, and the Wildcats have 10 seniors this year that will

be looked to fill the leadership left behind from last year's group.

"So

far practices have been going very well," Ebenstein said. "We have some holes

to fill from last year's roster, but the guys have been working very hard and

are ready to fill those spots.

"We return 13 letterman with 8 individuals who started a game on offense and 6 individuals who started a game on defense. We will be younger with some new faces, but we have many kids who are ready to take that step up and compete at the varsity level."

One constant is third-year quarterback Madden Rutherford, who will once again lead the Wildcat offense. The Louisburg senior threw for more than 1,100 yards last season and had 14 touchdowns.

#### Rutherford

is also a threat to take off and run as he recorded 354 yards on the ground and

had four touchdowns a year ago as a second-team All-Frontier League player. He

also earned an all-league first team as a punter.

#### "Returning

a quarterback is always a blessing, but when you can bring back a kid who is

starting for his third season, it is a huge advantage," Ebenstein said. "He is

the smartest football player I have ever coached and knows our offensive system

inside and out. He knows his job, he knows every route the receivers run and he knows all the blocking assignments the backs have. Honestly,

he knows most all of the offensive line responsibilities as well."



Louisburg head coach Robert Ebenstein is in his third season leading the Wildcats.

That offensive line will have a little different look from a year ago. Returning are all-league players Brayden White and Garrett Harding, and the Wildcats seniors will anchor that front along with fellow senior tight end Michael Waldron.

White,

who was a first-team All-Frontier League selection a year ago, will lead the

way at tackle and Harding will be a fixture at guard. Seniors Ian McGuire, Sam

Kratochvil, along with juniors Andy Hupp, Eli Johnson and sophomore Dominic

Owens are new faces who could help the Wildcats up front this season.

#### Louisburg

lost three off that line from last season, including Kiefer Tucker, who was an

All-Frontier League first team player on both sides of ball. Still, Ebenstein

likes what he has coming back to help pave the way up front.

"Our offensive line will have some new faces, but should be a dominant force," Ebenstein said. "We have smart football kids all over the field and we will have the most athletic offensive line we have had in a long time. We might not be as big as we have in the past, but our speed up front will be a strength.

"Being able to zone our opponents, and double off and be able to pick up those quick linebackers, will be a strength of ours. Also having Waldron return at tight end is a plus as well as his blocking, and knowledge of the system, is outstanding."



Senior Michael Waldron hauls in a catch during the team's camp over the summer.

The Wildcats also have a stable of running backs to be able to get through those holes. Gone is All-League first-teamer Austin Moore, who is now with the Kansas State football program, but Ebenstein will have plenty have plenty to choose from to help fill the void.

Senior Charlie Koontz and junior Ben Wiedenmann both saw varsity time last season, and will lead the way in 2019. Juniors Justin Collins, Jay Scollin and sophomore Kolby Kattau will also see time in the backfield.

"This year our running backs will look a lot different," Ebenstein said. "We lost some quality kids, but some tough kids are ready to take those spots. All of those guys will be in the backfield this year and all do certain things very well. You should be hearing many names called out over the speakers this season. This is, by far, is the fastest backfield we have had in Louisburg since I have been here."

Defense was a staple for the Wildcats a year ago, and that

helped them to an undefeated league title. Although they have spots to fill, the Wildcats still figure to be strong in that area as well.

Hupp, Koontz, Kattau and sophomore Brandon Doles will all see a lot of time at the linebacker spot, while Hupp and Koontz are both

returning starters at the position. White and Harding will anchor the middle of

the defensive line as returning starters.

Wiedenmann will bring some speed off the edge from the defensive end spot, while Johnson, senior Andrew Krause and Owens will see time at defensive end.

In the secondary, Waldron, along with juniors Weston Guetterman, Collins, Konnor Vohs and Ben Guetterman will all see action in the defensive backfield.

Assistant coach Jeff Lohse is also returning as the team's defensive coordinator as he guided the Wildcats to one of Class 4A's top defenses a year ago.

"With Lohse calling the defense, I am always confident in our defense to be in the right spots and make plays," Ebenstein said. "Schematically,

it will look similar to the Louisburg defenses over the years, but we will have

some new faces for sure.

"Our defensive line should be a strength of ours with Harding and White anchoring the middle and I think Ben Wiedenmann could possibly be one of the fastest defensive ends in the state."

The Wildcats also return both of their kickers on special teams as senior Drake Varns will resume his placekicking

duties, while Rutherford is the team's punter.

The Frontier League will provide a lot of competition for the Wildcats again this season, including rival Paola, which is one of the

favorites to win the league crown.

Still, Louisburg hopes to figure into that conversation at the end of the year and make a run in the state playoffs. It all starts

Friday when the Wildcats travel to Spring Hill for their season opener.

"Our expectations are always the same," Ebenstein said.

"We want to get better every practice, be prepared for every game, and

represent this team in the best light we can.

#### "The

Frontier League is tough week in and week out. There are no easy games in this

league, but right now I am really only concerned with Spring Hill and leaving that game, 1-0."

# Numbers up for all LHS fall programs as athletes battle through heat



Last fall, each of the four

Louisburg High School athletic programs had something to brag about.

Whether it was football's 10-1

season that ended with a regional championship, volleyball's state runner-up

finish, cross country's two state medalists and state qualifying girls team or

the boys' soccer regional championship appearance — the Wildcats had plenty to

cheer about and several athletes took notice.

Numbers are up for all four programs following the first day of practice Monday and the coaches and athletes are excited to get the season started after last year's successes.

The Wildcat football team saw a big jump in numbers as they have 70 students out this season and football coach Robert Ebenstein and has liked what he seen through the first couple days of workouts.

"Our numbers are up and based on the numbers at the middle school and youth programs and I expect them to keep growing," Ebenstein said. "I am very excited for practice to get going. When you finish the season off with a loss in the playoffs it sticks with you and the opportunity to go play another game creates that energy and that eager feeling to get going. So far I am very pleased with our kids' focus and effort. We need to continue to get better every day."

Louisburg volleyball has also seen a spike in its numbers as

athletes have attended tryouts. Those tryouts will go through Wednesday and

head coach Jessica Compliment believes those high numbers will be beneficial

down the road.

"The players are excited, but I

think some are nervous as well with tryouts and cuts these first few days," Compliment

said. "Forty is the most we've had tryout for quite some time. Generally we

have around 35. The higher numbers leads to more competition for uniforms and playing time."

Cross country head coach John Reece is pulling

double duty this season as he, and assistant coach Paul Restivo, will also be

leading the new Louisburg Middle School program. The Wildcats have a combined

59 runners out between the two programs, including 37 on the high school side.

Louisburg returns a majority of its girls team that qualified for state a year ago, including its two state medalists in

senior Trinity Moore and sophomore Reese Johnson.

Despite a little hiccup with the heat during the first two days of workouts, coach Reece likes what he sees from both teams.

"It was great to get started, and yes the heat caused us to change our workout a little bit, but we still got in our

miles," Reece said. "We had a good turnout during summer running, so as a whole

they are ready to get to the good stuff and go compete.

"There is definitely a huge difference

with LMS joining the crew. Two coaches managing 59 kids is a lot, and we might

need more help for supervision as we get more personalized with workouts for

different levels of runners, but this is a good thing for Louisburg's cross

country program. It is going to be a fun year."

Soccer also saw a big increase in

interest as the Wildcats have 44 athletes trying out this season and they will

continue the tryout process through Thursday. It is a good problem to have for

head coach Kyle Conley and he has liked what he has seen so far as the Wildcats

look to take another step forward this year.

"The kids worked hard, but showed we have

a lot of work to do," Conley said. "We had a really, really good summer, but we

got a little rusty with the month off. This year we are getting back to focus

on our culture and getting back to playing for each other. The boys have been

focused and determined to improve this season."

However, the first two day of practices weren't without their challenges as intense heat and humidity caused some of the programs to change their schedules, including soccer, which moved its practice to the evening on Tuesday and spent some time indoors Monday.

#### "The

heat was an interesting factor to go along with the late start due to the

KSHSAA schedule," Conley said. "We started in the AUX gym for the first hour

and 15 minutes then transitioned outside for an hour. It was frustrating but

the boys handled it very well."

#### With

the heat advisories, teams had to take precautions with their athletes and

everything seemed to go smoothly with the hot weather.

"There is nothing you can do about the heat, and it is not centralized to Louisburg, so everybody has to deal with it," Ebenstein said. "So you just do what you have to do when it comes to moving practice to the evening or whatever. I do not mind these hot early practices as it sets the tone that athletes need to take care of their bodies, and the acclimatization process gets going from the beginning. I would much rather have it this way instead of it being cool and the first hot week comes on a game week."

With the first day of practice starting

later than normal, the start of competition will also be pushed back. Team

scrimmages will be the Friday before Labor Day and actual competition won't

start until Sept. 3.

Soccer will host Fort Scott in its season

opener on Sept. 3 and volleyball will travel to Paola for dual on the same day.

Cross country opens its season on Sept. 5 at the Anderson County Invitational

and football will travel to Spring Hill on Sept. 6.

# Stiles, Lohse, Burk and Bowes to be inducted into LHS Hall of Fame



Dennis Stiles (top left), John Lohse (top right), Jason Burk (bottom left) and Krystal (Bowes) Grojean will be inducted into the Louisburg High School Athletic Hall of Fame this fall.

It has been 11 years since Louisburg High School had inducted a class into its athletic hall of fame, but the wait for a new class is finally over.

The USD 416 Endowment Association, which oversees the LHS Athletic Hall of Fame, has announced a new 4-member class. Dennis Stiles (Class of 1969), John Lohse (1995), Jason Burk (1999) and Krystal (Bowes) Grojean (2001) were the top four vote getters in this year's hall of fame voting and will be honored in an induction ceremony sometime this fall.

"Louisburg has a history of great athletes," said Damon Dennis, a USD 416 Endowment Association board member. "We had a good cross-section of both young and older voters this year that really took their job seriously. The four athletes chosen represent several generations of former Wildcats and each one were dominant in their particular era and sports. The Endowment Association is excited to get the Hall of Fame going again and plan on some big things in the future."

More than two dozen voters, that includes current members of the hall of fame, long-time Louisburg residents, teachers and coaches, voted on the class in June. Each voter was asked to submit their top four choices for the hall and votes were then tabulated.

To be eligible for the hall of fame, the inductee must wait at least 10 years following graduation to be nominated.

The last class that was inducted was in 2008 and Dennis, and the rest of the Endowment Association, is committed to making this a yearly occurrence moving forward.

#### Here

are the accomplishments of each of the newest hall of fame inductees. Look for

more information on an induction ceremony in the coming weeks.



**Dennis Stiles** 

### Dennis Stiles — Class of 1969 — Football, Basketball, Track

#### Stiles

lettered 4 years in football and

track and 3 years in basketball. His senior year he was named all-league and

all-state in football and was co-captain on the Wildcat team

that finished the year 4-4.

As sophomore, he played on the varsity basketball team which was 12-0 in

league play, finished the year 19-3 and were district champions. He earned

honorable mention all-state honors his sophomore and junior seasons and was

second-team all-state his senior year. Stiles was at one time the school's

career scoring leader.

Stiles competed at the state

track meet as a junior and senior where he placed fourth in the discus his

senior year. He previously held school records in the discus and triple jump.

He also received a football scholarship to Kansas State University.



John Lohse

#### John Lohse — Class of 1995 — Football, Basketball and Baseball

Lohse lettered all four years in baseball and was selected to

represent

Kansas in the all-star baseball classic his senior year. He was an all-league

pitcher and centerfielder for the Wildcats his sophomore through senior years.

He had a .510 average his junior and senior seasons with 10 home runs his

junior year and 12 more his senior season.

In football, Lohse was a 3-year letterwinner. He was an allleague wide

receiver his junior and senior seasons. In his senior year, he had 850 yards

receiving and 11 touchdowns and was later selected to represent Kansas in the

Metro Classic All-Star Game.

Lohse was also a 3-year letterwinner in basketball and was an all-league selection his junior and senior seasons. He averaged a double-double his junior and senior years.

Post-graduation, Lohse attended Pittsburg State on a baseball scholarship and played on the Gorilla team for four years. He was selected to

the all-MIAA team his sophomore and junior seasons before injuring his shoulder

his senior year. He had a .315 average his junior and senior seasons. In his

first collegiate at-bat his freshman year, Lohse hit a gamewinning grand slam

to give Pitt State its first win over Missouri Southern in five years.



Jason Burk

### Jason Burk - Class of 1999 - Track and Football

Burk was a 4-year letterwinner for the Louisburg track and field team

and qualified for state in all four years in four events. He accumulated 12

state medals, 16 regional track medals and 14 Frontier League medals. Burk was

selected to the Kansas City All-Metro track team in 1998 and 1999.

During his senior season, Burk was a state champion in both the triple

and long jump. He won the triple jump with a leap 48 feet and the long jump

with a mark of 22-5. He also finished fifth in the 100-meter dash and sixth in

the high jump. As a junior, Burk won a state championship in the triple jump

with mark of 46 feet and won three more state medals. He took second long jump,

fourth in the 100 dash and sixth in the 200 dash. As a sophomore, Burk won

state medals in the triple jump (second), long jump (fourth)

and  $4\times100$  relay (third). He was a member of the  $4\times100$  team that took second at state as a freshman in 1996.

At one time, Burk held seven school records. He currently holds school

records in the triple jump, high jump and long jump. Burk holds the school

record for most points in a season with 326.

Burk also played football, where he was a part of bi-district, district

and regional championship teams.



Krystal (Bowes) Grojean

## Krystal (Bowes) Grojean — Class of 2001 — Volleyball, Basketball, Track

Bowes was a 4-year letterwinner in track before she was offered a

scholarship on the Wichita State track and field team.

In her senior season at Louisburg, Bowes earned three state medals,

including a second-place finish in the javelin with a throw of 145-10. She was

also third in the discus with a toss of 126-9 and fifth in the shot put at

37-5. As a sophomore and junior, she finished sixth in the discus at state. In

all, Bowes racked up five state medals in her high school career before moving

on to Wichita State. She is the current Louisburg record holder in the javelin

(146-10) and discus (137-11).

At Wichita State, she earned academic All-American honors and was a

team captain all four years. Bowes was a two-time NCAA national qualifier and

finished fifth in the javelin and was second in the Missouri Valley Conference

in 2006. In 2004, Bowes took first in the MVC in the javelin and fourth in the

discus. In 2003, she won the Missouri Valley Conference discus title, was

second in the javelin and fourth in the hammer throw. Bowes was also a member

two Shocker teams that won conference titles.

In volleyball and basketball at LHS, Bowes was a 3-year letterwinner in each sport and earned first-team all-Frontier League honors each season.

Current members of the LHS Hall of Fame

#### Class of 2005:

Tom

Stevens - 1934 - Track and Field (High Jump)

```
1947/48
Undefeated Football Teams
Richard
Meiers - 1949 - Basketball/Football
Don
Meek - 1965-1998 - Coach/Administrator
Larry
Harding - 1976-1994 - Volleyball/Golf Coach
Amy
Dodson Goode - 1986 - Volleyball/Basketball
                        Class of 2006:
Jim
Wells - 1936 - Track and Field (Pole Vault)/Football
Doug
Eaton - 1971 - Wrestling
Sue
Truman Apple - 1974 - Track and Field/Volleyball/Basketball
Mike
Meek - 1985- Football/Wrestling/Track and Field
Jamie
                             Track
                                              Field
Waite
               1991
                                       and
                                                        (Pole
Vault)/Football/Basketball
                        Class of 2007
Alan
Taylor - 1949 - Football
```

Tim

Dozier - 1987 - Wrestling/Football

Beth

Dodson Dixon - 1989 - Volleyball/Basketball

Jeff

Lohse - 1991 - Baseball/Football/Basketball

Class of 2008

Greg

Kahmann - 1987 - Baseball/Football/Basketball

Mark

Buckingham — 1994 — Basketball

# Blue Caplinger selected as 2019 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year



Blue Caplinger made history in a few different ways for Louisburg High School during the 2018-19 season.

Caplinger, along with fellow LHS student Alyse Moore, became the first Wildcat athlete in recent memory — if ever — to participate in two sports during the same season. All that led up to what was a spectacular finish to his senior year.

Caplinger helped the 4×400-meter

relay to a state championship in late May, which was the school's first individual

track title since 2015. When all was said and done, Caplinger lettered in four sports this past year.

These are just a couple of the reasons why Caplinger was chosen as the 2019 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year.

The award, which is in its second

year, is to recognize an outstanding LHS student athlete. Louisburg Sports Zone

asked the head coaches at LHS to submit nominations and those nominations were

then organized and submitted back to the coaches for a vote.

The coaches then submitted their top three choices and the number of votes were added up, which decided the

winner.

Caplinger was one of the leaders

of the Wildcat football team that reeled off 10 straight wins to start the season

and captured a regional championship before falling to eventual state champion
Bishop Miege.

He was an All-Frontier League player on both sides of the ball as he earned first team defensive honors from the safety spot with 31 tackles, two fumble recoveries and an interception.



Blue Caplinger poses for picture with his coaches (from left), boys track coach Andy Wright, head football coach Robert Ebenstein and baseball coach Joel McGhee. Not pictured is wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird.

Caplinger played a couple different positions offensively and earned second team all-league honors as a multi-purpose player. He had 310 yards rushing and four touchdowns to go along 234 yards receiving and two more scores.

He was also the lead blocker on a

lot of the big runs that teammate Austin Moore — who was a first-team

all-league and all-state running back — had during the season.

"Blue was the most all-purpose player we had," Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein said. "He was the ideal teammate who put the team first all the time. He always did anything that was asked of him. He was a tough competitor and a great all-around person."

During the wrestling season, Caplinger was a state-ranked wrestler at 170 pounds for much of the year. He ended his season with a team-high

33-5 record and was a regional champion.

At the Class 4A state tournament, Caplinger finished one win shy of his first state medal. In all, Caplinger finished with a team high in wins and also holds the school record for most career reversals (72) and most career escapes (86). He ended his Wildcat career with a 111-57 record.

"Anyone who knows Blue understands what a great young man he is," Louisburg wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Blue embodies so much

about what wrestling is all about. I wanted him to get that state medal so

badly, and he came so close not once, but twice. With these sorts of setbacks,

Blue has demonstrated that he's gained the resilience to be a champion in life."

In the spring, Caplinger became a dual-sport athlete as he participated in both baseball and track and field.

Although his focus was on track, Caplinger helped out the Wildcat baseball team as a pinch-runner as he stole five bases in eight games.

However, Caplinger did a lot of his damage on the track as he was one of the Wildcats' top sprinters. He joined Justin Collins, Ben Wiedenmann and Chris Williams to win the Class 4A state title in the  $4\times400$ -meter relay.

Caplinger, along with Charlie Koontz, Wiedenmann and Collins, also medaled fifth at state in the 4×100 relay. Both relays broke school records this past season in the Frontier League and regional meets.

Caplinger will continue his athletic career this fall as he plans to attend Benedictine College on a football scholarship.

## Moore, Tucker excited for Shrine Bowl opportunity



Louisburg's Austin Moore (left) and Kiefer Tucker will represent the East side of the state Saturday during the Kansas Shrine Bowl in Dodge City. They will be joined by Louisburg head football coach Robert Ebenstein, who is an assistant coach on the team.

The Kansas Shrine Bowl is one of the premier all-star football games as it pits the best high school seniors from each side of the state.

As it turns out, Louisburg High School is going to have two representatives.

Austin Moore was selected to join

the East squad back in December along with Louisburg head coach Robert

Ebenstein, but the Shrine Bowl rules state that only one player from each

school can be chosen — that is unless an opening comes up shortly before the game.

So when an opening became available, Kiefer Tucker, who was a first team All-Frontier League player on both sides of the

ball for Louisburg, got a text from his high school coach.

Tucker is going to get one more chance to play alongside his former teammate and coach as he was selected as a replacement to play in the Shrine Bowl and practiced with the East team earlier this week in Ottawa.

"Being selected to play in the Shrine Bowl is a great honor and I was smiling pretty big when I got the text from Coach E saying there is a spot open for me," Tucker said. "I'm excited to be able to go up against great talent."

Moore, who won first team

all-league, all-state and player of the year honors following his senior season

last fall, will be one the East's top players on defense. He will start at linebacker

and is looking forward to the challenge of going up against the West.

"The defense we are running is a 3-5 and I will be one of the 'dog linebackers,'" Moore said. "The dog linebackers are to the outside of the middle backer. I'm just really excited to represent Louisburg again on Saturday and to play another football game."

Tucker, on the other hand, will

see a lot of time on the offensive side of the ball. He is going to play at the

guard spot after originally starting on the defensive side and will be coached

by Ebenstein, who is working with the offensive line.

Tucker is looking forward to suiting up one final time with his teammate and coach, as they will each go their separate ways after this game.

"Being able to play with Austin one last time is one of my favorite parts about this coming

weekend," Tucker

said. "The last time we were on the field together, Austin's season was taken

from him early (broken collarbone) and to be able to play with him again means

a lot to me. One top of that, to be able to get coached by Coach E one more time

is a pretty great thing. To be able to end my high school career with both of

them right by me will mean a lot."

Moore feels the same as the three

Louisburg representatives have gotten a chance to relive some of the Wildcats'

past successes.

"It has been really fun being out

on the field with Coach E and Kiefer one more time," Moore said. "We've been

talking about all of the fun times we've had over the past four years, and it

has definitely made me miss playing for Louisburg even more."

Although the game is what Moore

and Tucker have been preparing for, they both also realize this week is more

than just a game.

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.

Both Moore and Tucker traveled from Ottawa to Dodge City yesterday and will spend the rest of this week preparing for the game. They

will also get the opportunity to meet some of the patients from the Shriners
Hospital.

"I'm just honored to be selected because the Shrine Bowl is more than just a game," Tucker said. "On the day where we meet some of the kids,

I hope to be able to spread a few smiles and share some laughs with them."

Kickoff for the game is set for 7 p.m. on Saturday at Memorial Stadium in Dodge City and the game will be streamed at www.kansasshrinebowl.com.

## 2019 Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Year nominees



For the past three 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 second 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. In the next week, I will announce this year's recipients.

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



### CARSON BUFFINGTON — SENIOR — BASKETBALL, SOCCER, VOLLEYBALL

Carson was a 3-time letter winner in her senior season and was named as a team captain in volleyball, basketball and soccer.

In volleyball, Buffington earned second team All-Frontier League honors as she helped lead the Lady Cats to a Class 4A state runner-up

performance. She also moved from her starting setter position to the outside

hitter spot and had a lot of success for the Lady Cats as she tallied 130 kills

in her new position. With all that success, Buffington was also selected to the

Greater Kansas City Volleyball Coaches Association Senior All-Star Match.

Buffington also wrapped up a strong career for the Louisburg basketball team as she averaged eight points and seven

rebounds to go along with three steals a contest. She was named as a Frontier League honorable mention this past season, and she also was selected as an all-state honorable mention.

In girls soccer, Buffington was the starting goalie for Louisburg in all 20 games. She posted 13 shutouts, which is a school record and had a .952 goals against average, which is also a school record. Buffington had 90 saves on the season that ended as a Class 4-1A state runner up for the second consecutive year. For her efforts, she was also selected second team All-Frontier League. Buffington was also named first team all-state goalie and was named Goalkeeper of the Year.



ANNA DIXON — SENIOR — VOLLEYBALL

Anna wrapped up her fourth volleyball season as a varsity starter for the Lady Cats and guided Louisburg to its second

consecutive Class 4A-state runner-up finish.

Dixon, who is currently with the Kansas State volleyball team, ended her senior season with 584 kills and had a hitting percentage of

.260. She also added 325 digs, 50 aces and 42 blocks as she played all six

rotations. With those lofty numbers, Dixon earned several big time honors in

her final season.

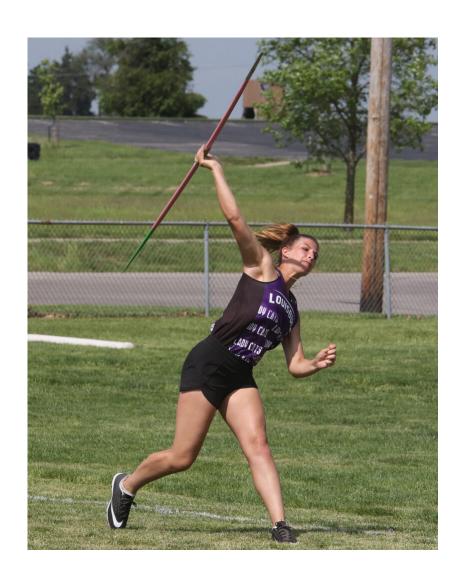
She was selected as an All-Frontier League first team player and was also named to the 4A State All-Tournament Team. Those honors continued

as she was named the Kansas Volleyball Coaches Association Class 4A Player of the

Year and earned a spot on KVA All-State First Team.

Following the season, Dixon was also named as an Under-Armour All-American also earned MaxPreps/American Volleyball Coaches

Association Player of the Week honors.



### ALYSE MOORE - SOPHOMORE - BASKETBALL, SOFTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD

Alyse is a 3-sport varsity letter-winner this past year as she earned letters for the basketball, softball and track and field teams. This past spring season, Moore went to state in two different sports and became the first Wildcat athlete in recent memory to do so.

In her first season in track and field, Moore threw the javelin for the Lady Cats and went on to become regional champion as she

eclipsed her personal best throw by almost 25 feet in just her third

competition of the season. The following week, she medaled fourth at the Class

4A state tournament with a personal best throw of 131 feet and

#### 9 inches.

Moore was also the starting shortstop for the Lady Cats as she helped Louisburg to its first regional championship since 2014.

During the basketball season, Moore was a starter for the Lady Cats and averaged six points, five rebounds and three steals a game.



#### TRINITY MOORE - JUNIOR - CROSS COUNTRY, SOCCER

Trinity is 2-sport letter-winner for Louisburg this past year as she had state performances in both cross country and soccer.

During the fall, Moore was the top runner on the Louisburg girls cross country team as she helped the Lady Cats to a regional runner-up finish and qualified for state as a team for the first time in school history. Moore medaled fourth at the Class 4A state meet in Wamego and currently holds the school record for the fastest time in program history. She

also earned first-team All-Frontier League honors for her third place finish at the league meet.

In soccer, Moore was a starter on the Wildcat team that recently finished as the Class 4-1A state runner-up for the second consecutive year. At the midfield spot, she finished the season with 12 goals and six assists and was also named to the All-Frontier League first team.



## DELANEY WRIGHT - FRESHMAN - BASKETBALL, CROSS COUNTRY, TRACK AND FIELD

Delaney is a 3-sport letter-winner as she took part in cross country, basketball and track and field and competed at the state level in two of those.

Wright found most of her success in track and field as she

earned four medals at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships

in Wichita this past month. She medaled in the long jump, 400-meter-dash,

200-meter dash and as a member of the 4×400-relay.

During the regional meet, Wright broke two school records (long jump, 400 dash) and earned a regional and Frontier League title in the

long jump. She also earned a medal in the long jump at the Kansas Relays

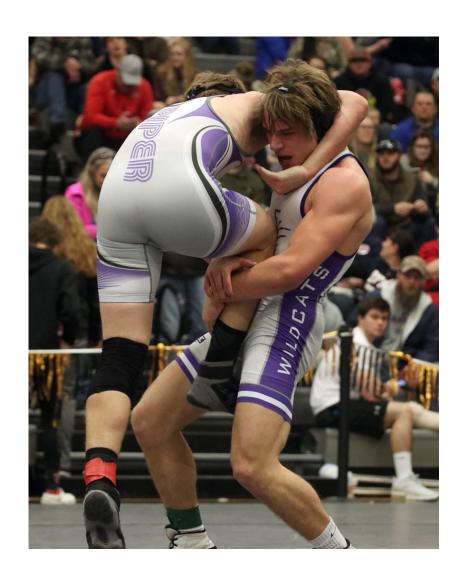
earlier in the season.

In cross country, Wright was a member of the Louisburg team that finished as a Class 4A regional runner-up and qualified for the state meet

as a team for the first time in school history. In basketball, Wright saw

playing time at the varsity level as a freshman at different points throughout the season.

#### MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



## BLUE CAPLINGER - SENIOR - BASEBALL, FOOTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD, WRESTLING

Blue is a 4-sport letter-winner in football, wrestling, baseball and track and field and competed at the state level in two of the sports.

In football, Caplinger was an All-Frontier League player on both sides of the ball as he was named to the first team defense as a defensive

back and second team offense as a multi-purpose player. On defense, Caplinger,

who helped Louisburg to a 10-1 record and a regional championship, had 31

tackles from the safety spot and also had two tackles for a loss, two fumble

recoveries and an interception. Offensively, he had 544 total yards and six touchdowns.

On the wrestling mat, Caplinger was a regional champion at 170 pounds and finished his season with a 33-5 record. The Louisburg senior

fell one match short of state medal with a 2-2 record at the Class 4A state

tournament. He currently holds the school record for most career reversals (72)

and most career escapes (86). Following the season, he was also named to the

KWCA Academic All-State first team.

Caplinger split time between baseball and track and field in the spring. Although he spent time as a reserve and pinchrunner on the

baseball team, Caplinger found a lot of success on the track.

He qualified for state as a member of two relays. Caplinger was a member of the  $4\times400$  relay team that won the Class 4A state championship in 3 minutes and 25 seconds. Caplinger also helped the  $4\times100$  relay to a fifth place finish and went on to garner two state medals.

Caplinger will join the Benedictine football team this fall.



### AUSTIN MOORE - SENIOR - FOOTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD, WRESTLING

Austin is a 3-sport letter winner in football, wrestling and track and field and was among the state's best in two of the sports.

Moore thrived on the football field for the Wildcats as he helped Louisburg to a 10-1 record and a regional championship. Moore was a first team All-Frontier League player on both sides of the ball and was the league's leading vote-getter. He went on to rack up all-state awards as the Louisburg senior earned Class 4A first team all-state honors as a running back from the Topeka Capital-Journal and the Kansas Football Coaches Association. Moore was also named as a Class 4A first team all-state linebacker from the Wichita Eagle.

When the season was all said and done, Moore tallied 1,554 total yards from the running back spot, including 1,428 yards on the ground,

and had 21 touchdowns before he broke his collarbone during the regional

championship game.

With those numbers, he was named the Kansas Small Class Player of the Year by 810 Varsity and was All-Purpose Player of the Year by

Kpreps.com. Earlier this year, Moore was also named to the Kansas Shrine Bowl roster.

On the wrestling mat, Moore missed more than half of the season with his broken collarbone, but came back in a big way. Moore won his

first 14 matches when coming back at 220 pounds, which included a regional

championship. He went on to earn his first state medal as he finished fourth at

the Class 4A state tournament with a 3-2 record. He was also named to the KWCA

Academic All-State first team.

During the spring, he was a member of the Louisburg track and field team and threw the javelin for the Wildcats. He was also on the throwers relay that ranked Top 5 nationally at one point in the season.

Moore will join the Kansas State football team this fall.



## KIEFER TUCKER — SENIOR — FOOTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD, WEIGHTLIFTING

Kiefer is a 2-sport letter winner in football and track and field and also went to state competition in two activities.

Tucker was a presence on the line of scrimmage for the Louisburg football team as he was a first team All-Frontier League player on

both sides of the ball and helped the Wildcats to a 10-1 record and a regional championship.

The Louisburg senior was among on the leaders on the offensive line as he helped pave the way for more than 3,500 yards of total

offense. On defense, Tucker recorded 55 tackles from the defensive end spot,

including three tackles for a loss, three forced fumbles, a fumble recovery and

a sack. Those numbers helped earn him honorable mention all-

state honors and was

also named to the all-state team by the Kansas Football Coaches Association.

The honors kept coming for Tucker as he was recently selected to participate in

the Kansas Shrine Bowl.

During the winter, Tucker was a member of the Louisburg powerlifting team and certainly made his mark there as well. Tucker won the Class

4A state championship in the 220-pound class and broke a 24-year-old record in

the bench press with a lift of 375 pounds.

In track and field, Tucker qualified for state for the first time in the discus. He finished as a regional runner-up and went on to take ninth at the Class 4A state meet in Wichita, just one spot away from earning a state medal.

Tucker will join the Emporia State football team this fall.

## Gage hopes to make most of opportunity at Pitt State



Brayden Gage is ready to take the next step in his football career as he joins the Pittsburg State football team this fall.

The decision wasn't an easy one for Brayden Gage, but the one thing the recent Louisburg graduate wanted to do was to play college football.

The idea of playing football at the next level was a simple one for Gage, but he wanted to make sure he found the right place. As it turned out, Pittsburg State was the best fit for him.

Gage accepted a preferred walk-on spot to play for the Gorillas in the fall and he is looking forward to the opportunity of playing Division II football.

"I am very excited," Gage said. "The

process was long, and I think I waited too long, but I am glad to finally know

where I am going and what I am doing. I think I went on about six visits and it

was pretty tough. I wasn't sure on what I wanted to do and I didn't know where

I wanted to go, but I am glad to have the opportunity at Pitt State."

Gage received offers from Baker,

William Jewell and Ottawa, but none felt like they were the right fit. Then the

opportunity arose with the Gorillas and he was able to connect with the

coaches, especially on the defensive side of the ball.

"The defensive coordinator is also

the safeties coach at Pitt," Gage said. "He is the one that has been talking to

me and I really like him. The rest of the coaches are great guys and they have

a lot of experience. I am ready to go down there and get to work."

Along with a new team comes a new position. Gage, who played cornerback in high school, will move to the safety position in college.



Brayden Gage signed with the Pittsburg State football in April. Sitting (from left) is his brother Bryce, his parents Jason and Melissa Gage, and his brother Brock. Standing is Louisburg head football coach Robert Ebenstein.

Gage was a first team All-Frontier

League wide receiver last season as he led Louisburg with 283 yards through the

air. He also had 258 yards rushing and a total of five touchdowns.

He hopes the speed he displayed on both sides of the ball last season will translate well at his new safety position.

"I am excited about the change and

I think it is going to be a good move," Gage said. "At the Division II level,

the corners are all really tall because they have to match up

with the

receivers, so I think I will fit in better at safety."

His time with the Louisburg

football team was a memorable one as the Wildcats finished this past season

with a 10-1 record and a regional championship, before falling to eventual

state champion Bishop Miege.

However, Gage realizes his

experience with Wildcat football was more than just about wins and losses.

"Louisburg football is amazing,"

he said. "I could talk a lot of about it, but then I would be here all day. It

is a true brotherhood. The friendships you make are going to last forever and I

had a lot of fun these last four years. It is a hard sport, but it is worth it."

Now, Gage will leave his Wildcat uniform behind and he will solely focus on Pittsburg State. He hopes to use that walk-on spot and turn it into something bigger and he might the get the opportunity to see some former Wildcats on the other side of the field.

"I just want to work hard every single

day and see what happens," Gage said. "I would love to have a scholarship maybe

my junior or senior year. I am very excited to play against the competition

down there. Kiefer (Tucker) is going to Emporia State, and that is our rival,

so I will be pretty excited to go up against him one day."