Wildcats hope summer work pays dividends in fall



Running back Austin Moore breaks free from a Prairie View defender thanks to a block from teammate Brayden White during Louisburg's scrimmage with the Buffalos in June.

In his first season as the Louisburg High School head football coach, the 2017 campaign was a successful one for Robert Ebenstein.

Ebenstein helped guide the Wildcats to a 6-3 record on the season, and did so while implementing many different aspects to the Louisburg program. However, the one part that left a bad taste in the Wildcats' mouth was the fact they missed the playoffs by one game.

Louisburg finished with a 1-2 record in district play and the Wildcats are hoping for a different outcome in 2018. To make sure that doesn't happen again, the Wildcat coaches and players went right to work at the beginning of June and haven't let up.

"To say our guys are pumped for the season to get here is an understatement," Ebenstein said. "Returning eight starters on both sides of the ball, with a lot of kids pushing for those positions, has made for a very committed and competitive off season. Being 6-3 last season and missing the playoffs has left us with a terrible feeling.

"We have some pretty high season goals and expectations, and our guys have been backing those goals with their weights attendance and efforts. With our high goals our guys have stayed grounded, and understand that right now we are just looking at beating Spring Hill on August 31."



Louisburg head coach Robert Ebenstein talks to his team prior to a scrimmage last month.

The Wildcats do return several starters from last season as they try to make a run at a Frontier League title, which will have a little different look to it. Gone from the league is De Soto, and the Frontier will welcome three new teams in Piper, Tonganoxie and Bonner Springs.

Adding those extra teams will make winning the league even more difficult, but Ebenstein has liked what he has seen from his group so far this summer, especially in the weight room.

Louisburg also had a pair of scrimmages to go along with their team camp.

"Like always were are putting our focus on our summer weights program," Ebenstein said. "Our weights program is as tough as any other program in the state both physically and mentally. Besides weights, we had our camp, review sessions through June and two 'jamboree' sessions. Our first session was against Olathe West and Prairie View and our second session was against Basehor-Linwood and Prairie View."

At this time a year ago, Ebenstein and the Wildcats spent most of the summer instituting a new offense. Now, they are able to take it a step further and the players have even taken in upon themselves to get better.



Louisburg senior Noah Larson reaches out to bring down an Olathe West runner during the team's scrimmage in June.

Instead of organized 7-on-7 activities, players got together on their own every Sunday evening to go through workouts. The Wildcats also used the team camp to fine tune their offense as they had more than 60 athletes out for the week-long session.

"Overall the coaching staff thought that camp went really well," Ebenstein said. "As a team we are far more advanced compared to where we were a year ago in our understanding of concepts and assignments.

"This year we already had the basic concept of the offense installed so we were able to go back and focus on the details. We were able to focus on technique that will allow us to be even better. Last year we were spinning mentally at times with terminology and concepts, this year being able to focus on the small things and perfect our steps, hand placement and timing will be very beneficial in the long run."

Moore named Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year



No matter the sport, Austin Moore didn't back down from a challenge and it was evident whenever he took to the field, the wrestling mat or a track runway.

Moore was an all-league and all-state player on the football field, found himself one victory away from a state wrestling

medal and improved throughout the season in the javelin.

It was his success in those athletic avenues that earned him the 2018 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year honor.

The award, which is in its first year, is to recognize an outstanding Louisburg High School 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.

On the football team, Moore was named a captain and had success on both sides of the ball. As a running back, he recorded 1,215 yards and 15 touchdowns. Defensively, he tallied more than 70 tackles from the linebacker spot.

Moore, a junior, was named to the all-Frontier League first team on both sides of the ball and was an honorable mention all-state selection by the Topeka-Capital Journal. He was also named an all-state, all-purpose player by K-Preps. Moore was also selected as the team's Offensive Player of the Year and recipient of the BAC Award.

"Austin is a great leader and is always looking to improve himself and his game," Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein said. "He is an extremely dedicated athlete to the program, but the most impressive thing about him is how he puts the team before himself all the time. Austin is not a real vocal kid, but actions speak louder than words and Austin is always leading by example."



Pictured (from left) is Louisburg boys track coach Andy Wright, football head coach Robert Ebenstein, Austin Moore and Wildcat wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird.

On the wrestling mat, he was also a team captain where he earned a 43-7 record and eclipsed the 100 career win mark. Moore was a state qualifier at 195 pounds and was a regional runner-up to go along with a Frontier League title. He won the team's Workhorse Award and set a program record with 38 pins. Moore also had the highest GPA on the team.

"Austin has been a pivotal part of our team's success since he joined us as a freshman," Louisburg wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird said. "He has a phenomenal work ethic in the practice room, and he is a relentless warrior in competitions. He knows how to set goals and pursue them with all his heart. He doesn't panic in adverse situations and he finds a way to prevail. No one wants to wrestle him twice. He's all about competitiveness, dedication, improvement and honor."

Moore threw the javelin for the Wildcat track and field team as recorded a season best throw of 151 feet in the regional meet and finished eighth.

With all he accomplished during the 2017-18 season, Moore will

get another crack at it all when he competes for the Wildcats in his senior season.

2018 Male Athlete of the Year Nominees



For the past two 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 highlight them a little bit. So this year, I wanted to take it a step further.

This 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 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 and then I will tabulate the results and determine the winner. In the next couple of weeks, I will announce this year recipient.

Below are the male nominees for this year's award in alphabetical order by last name. Congrats to all those who

2018 LOUISBURG SPORTS ZONE MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



Blue Caplinger — Junior — Football, Wrestling, Track and Field

Caplinger played a big role for the Wildcat football team as he shared quarterback duties to start the year and then moved over to the tight end spot, but his biggest impact came on defense where he earned honorable mention all-Frontier League honors. He finished the season with 32 tackles and two interceptions from his secondary spot.

On the wrestling mat, Caplinger was a state qualifier for the Wildcats at 160 pounds and finished his season with a 34-14 record. He won titles at two different tournaments and holds the team record with most career reversals with 71.

Caplinger also fared well on the track where he ran sprints and relays for Louisburg. Caplinger was a member of the 4×400 -meter relay team that finished seventh in the state in Class 4A, and also ran on the 4×100 -meter relay team that qualified for the Kansas Relays.



Cade Holtzen - Freshman - Cross Country,
 Wrestling, Track and Field

Holtzen thrived on the wrestling mat this past season as he earned the Wildcats' lone state medal. He finished sixth overall at 113 pounds and became the second freshman in school

history to place at state with a 45-6 record.

He also broke two team records in the process. Holtzen currently holds the mark for most wins in a season (45), most nearfall-2 (23). He also led the Wildcats in five other statistical categories.

Holtzen was a Frontier League and regional runner-up and won tournament titles at four different competitions.

He also ran on the Louisburg varsity cross country team and ran distance races for the Wildcat track team.



Austin Moore — junior — football, wrestling, track and field

On the football team, Moore was named a team captain and had

success on both sides of the ball. As a running back, he recorded 1,215 yards and 15 touchdowns. Defensively, he tallied more than 70 tackles from the linebacker spot.

Moore was named to the all-Frontier League first team on both sides of the ball and was an honorable mention all-state selection by the Topeka-Capital Journal and Wichita Eagle. He was also named an all-state, all-purpose player by K-Preps. Moore was also selected as the team's Offensive Player of the Year and recipient of the BAC Award.

On the wrestling mat, he was also a team captain and recorded a 43-7 record. Moore was a state qualifier at 195 pounds and was a regional runner-up. He won the team's Workhorse Award and set a program record with 38 pins. Moore also had the highest GPA on the team.

Moore threw the javelin for the Wildcat track and field team as recorded a season best throw of 151 feet in the regional meet and finished eighth.



John Wyatt Reece — Senior — Cross Country, Track and Field

Reece became the first state cross country medalist in several years for Louisburg High School. He finished 11^{th} overall at the Class 4A meet in Wamego to earn a medal and also earned all-state honors for his effort.

He also finished runner-up in the Frontier League meet and currently holds the third fastest time in school history. He earned first-team all-league honors. Reece also competed at the CCCNC National Race where he medaled individually and was a part of the second place team.

In track, Reece qualified for state in the 1,600 and 3,200-meter runs and finished ninth at state in the 3,200. He was also a regional runner-up in both events.

Reece was a Kansas Relays qualifier and medalist in the 2,000-meter steeplechase and currently holds the school record.

Reece has signed with Southwest Minnesota State next season and will run for the Mustangs starting next fall.



Madden Rutherford — Sophomore — Football, Basketball, Baseball

Rutherford took over the starting quarterback role as a sophomore for the Wildcat football team and became a dual-threat athlete at that position. He finished with 670 yards through the air and had eight touchdowns. On the ground, he racked up 318 yards and two more touchdowns. His performance helped him to a second-team honor on the all-Frontier League

team.

On the baseball diamond, Rutherford was the Wildcats' top pitcher on the season and also did his job out on in the field as he earned second team all-Frontier League honors as an outfielder. Rutherford started six games this season and pitched 28 innings with a 5.12 earned run average and struck out 23 batters. At the plate, he finished the season with a .408 average, three doubles, a triple, a home run and had 10 RBIs. He also ended the year with only three errors in 19 games.

Rutherford also saw a lot of varsity time for the Wildcat basketball team as he played in 17 games.



Grant Ryals - Senior - Soccer, Golf

Ryals led the Louisburg boys soccer team as he garnered first team all-league and all-state honors this past season. He served as team captain the past two seasons and scored seven goals and had 11 assists from the midfield spot.

His 11 assists put him fourth in the all-time Louisburg single season record and his 23 career assists place him second all-time.

Ryals will continue his soccer career at William Jewell College next season.

Ryals was also a member of the Louisburg varsity golf team and was a part of several runner-up team finishes with the Wildcats.

Doles excited for next step with Ottawa football



Louisburg senior Desmond Doles had a good season for the Wildcat football program and it translated to an opportunity with the Ottawa University football program this fall.

Just two years ago, Desmond Doles was nowhere to be found on a football field.

After playing football as a freshman, he decided to take a break from the sport as a sophomore and focus his energy on other things.

"That turned out to be a big mistake," Doles said.

Still, Doles learned from his miscue and went back out his junior season and fell in love with the sport. It turned out to be a good decision, because after a good senior year with the Wildcat program, Doles is ready to continue his career on the gridiron at the collegiate level.

Doles made it official on Feb. 14 when he signed his letter of intent, in front of family at friends at Louisburg High School, to play for Ottawa University.

It was a difficult decision for Doles as he had another offer to walk-on at Emporia State, a Division II program, but he felt Ottawa was going to be a better fit.

"My dad went there when I was first born and he played basketball there," Doles said. "So we were all familiar with the scene at Ottawa. We got more information about it and it turned out to be a pretty good school. It was a tough decision because I had two schools that I wanted to go to, but I felt I was more wanted at Ottawa and would be more successful playing for the Braves."



Desmond Doles signed his letter of intent to play football for Ottawa University on Feb. 14. Desmond is seated next to his parents Desiree and Bryan, along with his brother Brandon. Standing (from left) is Louisburg head football coach Robert Ebenstein and Ottawa offensive coordinator Curran White.

Doles played wide receiver and defensive back for the Wildcats and earned honorable mention all-Frontier League honors on both sides of the ball. He was the team's leading receiver with 284 yards through the air with five touchdowns.

On defense, Doles also finished with a team-high three interceptions to go along with 29 tackles. However, it is on offense where Doles plans to take the next step in college.

"Ottawa is more of a passing team and they said I would fit right in as a receiver and be able to help them," he said. "They didn't have the personnel they would have liked last year and they had a couple guys down that are going to be back this year and I think there are a lot of components that will make Ottawa really good next year. They got a new strength and conditioning coach and guys got stronger during the season, and I think the program looks very bright."

The Ottawa coaches also made a big impact on Doles and his decision to join a Braves program that finished with a 3-8 record a season ago. The Braves, under head coach Kent Kessinger, hope to take a step forward in the coming season as he has taken his program to the NAIA Championship Series six times.

"Coach K (Kessinger) is an awesome guy," Doles said. "He is super energetic and loves what he does. I really like that about him. He was just really interested in me and I felt wanted. I really like the coaching staff and they are all nice and super excited to have me."

As excited as Doles is to start his collegiate career, he knows playing football in Louisburg helped him grow as a player.

"My junior year, I got to see the field for varsity and I didn't think that I would get to," he said. "I just loved playing with those group of seniors. Even though it was mainly a run offense, it was still fun to be able to go outside and be considered a skinny offensive lineman as some wide receivers are called. This year we started throwing the ball more and it just made it so much more fun. It was a lot of fun.

"When I get to Ottawa, my goal is to just get stronger and faster. I want to work on coordination and footwork and being the best that I can be."

Injury sidelines Griffin for rest of season



New Orleans tight end Garrett Griffin was placed on injured reserve today by the Saints. Griffin, a Louisburg High School graduate, caught his first NFL pass last week in the team's regular season finale.

Less than a week after catching his first pass in the National Football League, Garrett Griffin's season has come to a close with the New Orleans Saints.

The Saints announced today that they have placed Griffin on injured reserve, which means he is out for the rest of the season. New Orleans, the No. 4 seed in the NFC, is slated to host Carolina on Sunday in the first round of the playoffs.

Griffin, who is a 2012 Louisburg High School graduate, had been dealing with a foot injury according to reports in New Orleans and was forced to miss the Saints' game in week 16.

The Saints' tight end played the regular season finale last week in which he caught his first NFL pass — a four-yard reception. He also returned a kickoff for 12 yards in New Orleans' 31-24 loss to Tampa Bay.

Griffin was activated from the Saints' practice squad on December 2 and played in his first professional game the following day in the Saints' 31-21 win over Carolina.

He became the latest casualty on the Saints' injury list as New Orleans has had to place 19 players on injured reserve this season.

OPINION: 2017 was a banner year for Louisburg



Having the opportunity to cover Louisburg High School athletics, for what has been almost 10 years now, I have seen a lot of different highs and lows.

I have been lucky enough to cover state championship teams and watched several athletes perform at the highest level. However, this last year has to be one for the record books when it comes to success at Louisburg High School.

For Wildcat athletics, 2017 was a banner year for many reasons.

Louisburg qualified for the state tournament in three different sports — volleyball, girls soccer and boys basketball — and the first two each placed in the top four.

The volleyball team was just a point away from winning the school's first state title after the Lady Cats finished second to defending state champion Rose Hill, and tied for the best finish in school history.

The Wildcat girls soccer team qualified for the state semifinals in just its second year of existence and suffered a heartbreaking 1-0 loss in the semifinals to eventually take fourth overall.

In boys basketball, the Wildcats qualified for the state tournament for the first time in 12 years despite getting knocked out in the first round by defending state champion Bishop Miege.

Most schools would love to have that success with their athletic programs, but for Louisburg, that was just the tip of the iceberg. As special as the seasons were for those three programs, the Wildcats also thrived in a few other sports.

Louisburg's cross country program, which has been around for 19 years, had the best season in its history — by far. Not only did the Wildcats have three state medalists for the first time ever, but it had a year that featured the school's first female league champion in Trinity Moore and the best league finish by a male, Wyatt Reece, who took second.

Tim Smith continued the Wildcat success as he became the school's first regional cross country champion, and Moore, Reece and Smith each went on to win a state medal. Moore and Smith also set school records for the fastest time.

The Wildcats also qualified the girls team for the first time in school history as Moore, Carlee Gassman, Reilly Alexander, Isabelle Holtzen, Kaitlyn Lewer, Payton Shaffer and Emily Williams took third at regionals and eventually 10th at state.

The Wildcat wrestling team tied a program best by qualifying eight for the state tournament and came back with a medal by Ryan Adams, who finished sixth.

Louisburg's track and field team persevered and qualified for state in 10 events and had two regional champions in Quinn Rigney and Chris Williams. Isabelle Holtzen and T.J. Dover each brought home their first state track medals.

The boys soccer team was one goal away from making its second consecutive trip to the state semifinals, but their run was halted by a loss to McPherson in state quarterfinals. Still, the Wildcats won a regional title, which was the seventh in team history.

Freshman Calvin Dillon led the Wildcat golf team this past year and recorded the program's first state medal in more than decade as he took 10th overall.

All these things and more I described in detail when releasing my top 10 stories of the year and what a year it was.

Obviously, I haven't had a chance to look through all the results, but I can't imagine a more successful year for LHS when you are talking about athletics. There may have been years in the 70s, 80s and 90s that I don't know about, but I find it hard to imagine one that tops 2017.

Sure, the 2010-11 school year featured two state championship teams in football and boys track and field and that was a fantastic time to be Wildcat, but as far as calendar years go, 2017 was one to remember.

Even outside the sports world, Louisburg High School put together many great accomplishments as the Wildcat Marching Band was selected to participate in the Tournament of Roses Parade and put on a great show for the nation on New Year's Day.

Then in October, the FFA Food Science team of Hallie Hutsell, Faith Seuferling, Addie Katzer and Hattie Harris won a national championship, while Hutsell and Seuferling placed second and third in the nation, respectively.

I don't get a lot of opportunities to cover programs or groups outside the sports world, but these are fantastic

accomplishments and deserved to be recognized.

For me, 2017 was a whirlwind. It seemed around every corner, school history was being made and there aren't many schools around the state that can boast about the successes Louisburg has experienced.

It was an honor for me to cover many of these historic runs in Wildcat history and I hope you all realize how lucky you have it. Louisburg is a school filled with great coaches who care about the student athletes.

Believe me, I know how fortunate I am to be able to be a part of something special and this place is it. If 2018 is half of what 2017 was, it will be a fun ride.

I can't wait for what 2018 has in store and hopefully you all will follow along to see what these Wildcats can accomplish.

Top 10 Stories of 2017



It was a successful, and eventful, 2017 for Louisburg High School athletics and for those who are connected to the Wildcat program. This past year created a lot of school history for LHS and several programs brought back state hardware to Louisburg.

Below are the Top 10 stories from 2017, along with a brief

explanation of each. Included in the explanation is the link to the actual story from the event.

This year was a blast to cover and I was blessed to have the opportunity to go along for the ride with many of these. As much fun as it was, I can't wait for 2018 to begin. Looking forward to it!



Louisburg's Calvin Dillon earns his first state golf medal as a freshman as he took 10th at the state meet.

10. Dillon medals at state golf

Louisburg freshman Calvin Dillon certainly didn't play like a first-year varsity player as he led the Wildcat golf team all season. Dillon finished 10^{th} at the Class 4A state tournament in Wamego and became the first Wildcat golfer to earn a state medal in several years.

Dillon made the state tournament alongside senior Ty Martin,

who finished in 28^{th} place overall after he earned his second straight state appearance.



Isabelle Holtzen earned her first state medal in the pole vault as she took seventh back in May.

9. Holtzen, Dover earn first state track medals



T.J. Dover finished eighth in the discus at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships in Wichita.

Junior Isabelle Holtzen and senior T.J. Dover both ended their track and field seasons on a good note as they earned state medals in late May at the Class 4A state meet in Wichita.

Holtzen had a big season in the pole vault as she ended seventh in the state after she cleared 10 feet. Earlier in the year, Holtzen broke a 15-year old school record in the pole vault as she topped 11-1.

Dover made his second consecutive trip to the state meet and finished strong in his final high school performance. He took eighth with a throw of 143-4.

The Wildcats qualified for the state meet in 10 events and had two regional champions in junior Quinn Rigney (100-meter dash) and sophomore Chris Williams (400 dash).



8. Frontier League adds three schools, says goodbye to another

For the Frontier League, 2017 brought a lot of changes to a league that has featured seven schools for the last several years.

Starting in the 2018-19 season, the Frontier League will add three new schools. Piper, Tonganoxie and Bonner Springs each accepted invitations to join the league last April to create a 10-team league.

It is didn't stay 10 teams for long as De Soto will make the move to a different league during the same season. The current league will be made up of nine schools: Louisburg, Paola, Ottawa, Spring Hill, Baldwin, Eudora, Piper, Tonganoxie and Bonner Springs.



7. Louisburg boys soccer wins regional crown

The Louisburg High School boys soccer team was trying to make its second consecutive trip to the state tournament this past season and the Wildcats almost got there.

Although the Wildcats fell to McPherson in the state quarterfinal game in late October, Louisburg put together another successful season that included a 1-0 victory over Independence in the regional championship game.

The Wildcats finished the season with a 13-6 record and earned the school's first Frontier League championship since 2010.



Junior Ryan Adams celebrates after he earned a state medal at 138 pounds.

6. Wildcat wrestling qualifies eight for state, Adams picks up medal

The Louisburg High School wrestling team had an historic season as it qualified eight for the Class 4A state wrestling tournament, which tied for the most in school history, during the regional tournament in February at Frontenac High School

Thad Hendrix (106 pounds), Nathan Keegan (120), Kyle Allen (126), Ryan Adams (138), Dylan Meyer (145), Austin Moore (170), Austin Raetzel (195) and Mason Koechner (285) all competed at the state tournament in Salina.

Adams earned the school's lone state medal on the season as he finished sixth overall at 138 pounds.



Louisburg head football and boys track and field coach Gary Griffin retired from the district after 32 years. It was one of many changes for the LHS athletic department.

5. LHS goes through staff/coaching changes

The 2017-18 school year looked a lot of different than in previous years for Louisburg High School athletics.

LHS saw a lot of changes in its coaching staff and in the administration as well. Activities director Darin Gagnebin stepped down and was replaced by current director Jeremy Holloway.

In the coaching department, former head and assistant football Gary Griffin retired from the district after 32 years with the high school and Louisburg promoted assistant Robert Ebenstein as the new Wildcat head football coach.

Jason Nelson resigned his post as the Wildcat head boys basketball coach and he was replaced with Ty Pfannenstiel. Griffin and Greg Darrington also resigned as the boys and girls track and field coaches, and were replaced by Andy Wright (boys) and John Reece (girls).



Louisburg cross country runners (from left) Tim Smith, Trinity Moore and Wyatt Reece each ended the season with a state medal.

4. LHS cross country earns three state medals, qualifies girls team

The Louisburg High School cross country team might have had

its best season in its 19-year history in 2017.

The Wildcats thrived against some of the state's best competition as seniors Wyatt Reece, Tim Smith and sophomore Trinity Moore all earned state medals at the Class 4A meet in Wamego.

Moore recorded the highest finish for a female runner in school history as she finished fifth in the state and broke her own school record in the process with a time of 19 minutes and 47 seconds.

In the boys race, Reece picked up his first state medal with a time of 17 minutes and finished 11th overall. Smith, who won a regional title the week before, came in 15th with a time of 17:05. Smith was the first Wildcat to win a regional title in school history.

Louisburg also made history as the Wildcat girls team qualified for the state meet for the first time after they finished third at their regional in Burlington. Moore joined Isabelle Holtzen, Reilly Alexander, Carlee Gassman, Kaitlyn Lewer, Payton Shaffer and Emily Williams to make up the sevenmember squad that finished 10th in the team standings at state.

Earlier in the year, Moore became the school's first Frontier League champion, while Reece recorded the highest league finish in boys history as he took second at the league meet.



3. Louisburg boys basketball earns first state tournament berth in 12 years

The season may not have started out the way the Louisburg boys basketball team would have liked, but it certainly finished on a positive note.

Louisburg knocked off rival Paola in the sub-state semfinals and then defeated Fort Scott in the championship game in early March to earn its first sub-state championship since 2005.

The Wildcats earned the No. 6 seed and squared off with eventual champion Bishop Miege at the Class 4A state tournament in Salina. The Stags ended the Wildcats' season with an 81-47 loss.

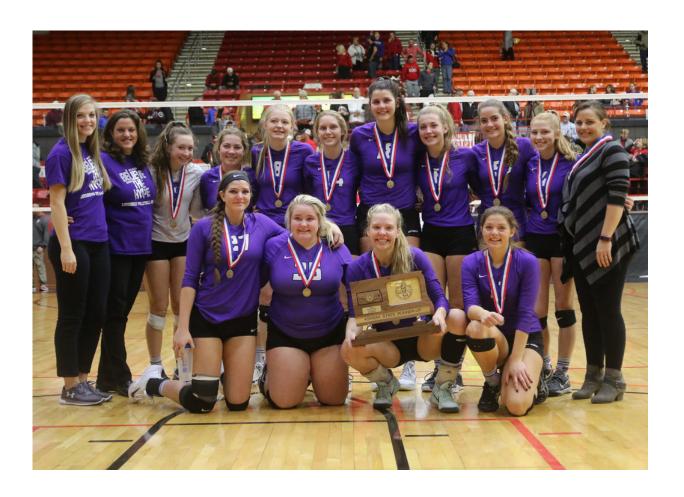


2. LHS girls soccer finishes fourth at state tournament

Louisburg's girls soccer program has only been around for two years, but the Wildcats have set high expectations from the beginning and that continued in 2017.

The Wildcats advanced to the Class 4-1A state semifinals for the first time in school history as they defeated Piper with a 2-1 victory in overtime. This victory came off their second consecutive regional title as they knocked off Bonner Springs.

At the state tournament, Louisburg faced off with Thomas More Prep and suffered a heart-breaking 1-0 loss in the semifinals. The Wildcats moved on to the third-place game against Maize South and eventually finished fourth overall.



1. Lady Cat volleyball ends season as state runner-up

The Louisburg High School volleyball team was just one point away from not only becoming the school's first state volleyball champion — but also the first female team to win a state title in Louisburg history.

As close as the Lady Cats got, they came up just short against defending state champion Rose Hill in late October at the Class 4A-Division I state championship. Louisburg fell 23-25, 25-10 and 29-27 in heartbreaking fashion to finish as the state runner-up.

Still, it was an impressive season for Louisburg volleyball as it finished with a 34-10 record. The Lady Cats reeled off wins over Basehor-Linwood, Bishop Miege and Rose Hill in pool play and then downed Wellington in the state semifinals.

The Lady Cats received several accolades as junior Anna Dixon

and senior Sophie McMullen earned first team all-state and all-league honors. Dixon was also named as the Co-Player of the Year in Class 4A-Division T.

Junior Carson Buffington was also named to the all-state tournament team with Dixon and McMullen.

Wildcats earn 14 spots on All-Frontier League team



Louisburg junior Austin Moore was the lone Frontier League player to earn first team All-Frontier League honors on both sides of the ball. Moore finished the year with a team-high in tackles, rushing yards and touchdowns.

Although the Louisburg High School football team didn't make the state playoffs, the Wildcats still considered it a successful season for many reasons.

Louisburg posted a 6-3 record after losing 17 seniors the season before to graduation, and the Wildcats had nearly had an entire new coaching staff, led by head coach Robert Ebenstein.

The Wildcats were a test to everyone in the Frontier League

and the other six league coaches were aware of that. The allleague honors were officially released Monday and Louisburg had players all over the team.

Louisburg had five players selected on the offense, while nine were named to the all-league defensive team.

"When you take into consideration how much talent is in our league, I thought we were represented very well," Ebenstein said. "Every year the Frontier is one of the toughest and most consistent leagues in the state of Kansas. Every season it seems like there is a Frontier League school in the final two in the East. De Soto was there this year, and last year us and Ottawa were two of the final four."

Austin Moore was one Louisburg player where the Frontier League coaches liked what they saw as he earned first-team honors on both sides of the ball and was the only player in the league to do so.

Moore, a junior, was named first team all-league on defense at middle linebacker and was a first team skill player on offense. It was the second season in a row he finished the year with first team honors on defense.



Senior lineman Garrett Lowry was a first team all-league selection on offense.

Senior Garrett Lowry was a first team selection on the offensive line for the Wildcats, while senior safety Christian Tosterud was named to the first team on defense.

Moore had a big season for the Wildcats as he led the team with 1,154 yards rushing and 15 total touchdowns. Defensively, Moore led Louisburg with 69 tackles, five sacks, five tackles for a loss, two forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries.

"Austin had a very solid season on both sides of the ball, but the most impressive thing about Austin is that he is a great kid and a true leader," Ebenstein said. "It is reassuring to have kids like Austin around because you know he is always going to do the right thing and represent Louisburg football to the utmost. Austin was the only player in the league to be selected to first team on both sides of the ball, and that is just a testament to him and his work ethic."

Lowry, who is a three-year starter for the Wildcats, was a fixture on the Wildcat offensive line as he helped pave the way for 2,145 yards rushing and almost 3,000 yards of total offense.

Tosterud was all over the field defensively for Louisburg as he was second on the team with 61 tackles and a forced fumble from his safety spot.



Senior safety Christian Tosterud earned first team all-league defensive honors.

"I was very excited to see Christian and Garrett both receive first team all-league honors as seniors this season," Ebenstein said. "Both of those guys basically missed an entire year of their high school careers, so for them to get past those trials and work their butts off I am so glad other coaches in the league saw their potential as well."

The Wildcats also had a pair of players selected to the second team.

Quarterback Madden Rutherford was named as a second team skill player. The Louisburg sophomore finished the season with 670 yards through the air and had eight touchdowns. He also finished with 318 yards rushing and two more touchdowns on the ground.



Sophomore quarterback Madden Rutherford tallied almost 1,000 yards of total offense as he was named second team all-league.

Defensively, junior Kiefer Tucker was a big part of the Wildcat defensive line as he ended up with 35 tackles, two

sacks, three tackles for a loss and two fumble recoveries.

"I am very excited for the future of this program as there are many kids that are ready to rise up and take that next step," Ebenstein said. "We have a lot of young guys returning on both sides of the ball who will big time contributions for us next year. Having a quarterback return who received any honors is a huge advantage. By the end of the year, Madden was making some solid decisions, and began to read veer, midline and our other option plays very well. He had just under 1,000 total yards combined.

"As for Kiefer, he will never be the biggest by the definition of an offensive or defensive lineman, but his motor is relentless and I think that is what the other league coached noticed about him. He is a kid that can close down three gaps and still play stretch and sweep because he is so fast and only has one speed and that is 100 percent."



Junior lineman Kiefer Tucker earned second team all-league defensive honors.

Louisburg's defense was well-represented on the honorable mention team as the Wildcats six players named. Defensive linemen Noah Larson and Lowry, linebacker Will Ridley and defensive backs Blue Caplinger, Brayden Gage and Desmond Doles earned all-league honors.

Offensively, Doles and Tucker were selected as honorable mentions, as well.

Doles was the team's leading receiver with 284 yards through the air and five touchdowns. He also added 29 tackles and a team-high three interceptions on defense.

Caplinger and Gage each had two interceptions for the Wildcats and had 32 and 26 tackles, respectively. Gage also had two

forced fumbles and Caplinger had two fumble recoveries.

On the line, Larson had 22 tackles but was second on the team with four sacks and had three tackles for a loss. Lowry finished with 26 tackles and one sack. At linebacker, Ridley had 41 stops to go along with two forced fumbles, a fumble recovery and a sack.

Also for the first time in program history, Ebenstein unveiled six team awards and were handed out during the team's banquet on Nov. 9.

Austin Moore was named the team's Offensive Player of the Year and earned the B.A.C. Award. Christian Tosterud was selected as the team's Defensive Player of the Year and was also give the Hammer Award.

Special Teams Player of the Year was given to Will Ridley and Scout Team Player of the Year was awarded to Jonathan DePriest. Kiefer Tucker earned the Hardhat Award.

"The team awards are something we decided to do to just acknowledge some of the work that our kids put into this sport," Ebenstein said. "A lot of people do not realize how much most all of our players sacrifice for this program. I could not even attempt to explain, but this commitment aspect is something that separates Louisburg from many other programs throughout the state. The team awards were just a way for us to honor these kids and keep that motivation going all year.

"I honestly thought it would be a fun easy thing to do, it was honestly the hardest thing we had to decide on all year as a coaching staff. The decisions on who would get these awards were the most heated discussion we had all year, in a positive light of course but we have so many deserving kids that it was a really difficult process to get it down to one player for each award."

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL

FIRST TEAM OFFENSE

Offensive Line: Marshall Kellner, De Soto, senior; Devin Haynes, De Soto, junior; Michael Mashburn, De Soto, junior; Jake Miller, senior, Paola; Garrett Lowry, Louisburg, senior

Skill: Bryce Mohl, De Soto, senior; Trevor Watts, De Soto, senior; Kurt Golubski, Paola, senior; Colton Gleghorn, Paola, senior; Luke Laskowski, Baldwin, senior; Austin Moore, Louisburg, junior

Kicker: Max Garrett, De Soto, senior

SECOND TEAM

Offensive Line: Dustin Adler, Eudora, senior; Keegan Wahlmeier, De Soto, senior; Jeff Schartz, Paola, junior; Mike Stribling, Paola, sophomore; Keegan Crotchett, Spring Hill, senior

Skill: Carter Neis, Eudora, junior; Leo Oplotnik, De Soto, senior; Brennen Feeback, Spring Hill, junior; Nathan Ewing, Spring Hill, senior; Hunter Ramirez, Baldwin, senior; Madden Rutherford, Louisburg, sophomore

Kicker: Jon Bock, Eudora, senior

HONORABLE MENTION

Offensive line: Griffin Oxley, Eudora, junior; Victor Berumen, De Soto, junior; Quinn Nichols, Baldwin, junior; **Kiefer Tucker, Louisburg, junior**; Tyler McKinney, Paola, junior

Skill: Elijah Kennedy, Eudora, senior; Darren Winans, De Soto, senior; Connor Strouse, De Soto, senior; Drew Smith, Paola, senior; Brandon Wilkes, Paola, senior; Brandon Carlson,

Ottawa, junior; Devion Bethea, Ottawa, senior; **Desmond Doles**, **Louisburg, senior**

Kicker: Bear Gardner, Spring Hill, sophomore; Ryan Wokutch, Paola, sophomore

FIRST TEAM DEFENSE

Defensive line: Zach Titus, De Soto, senior; Cole Zade, De Soto, senior; Clay Essex, Paola, sophomore; Keegan Crotchett, Spring Hill, senior

Linebacker: Jack Barger, De Soto, senior; Brendan Ohlmeier, Paola, junior; Kaleb Shaffer, Ottawa, senior; Austin Moore, Louisburg, junior

Defensive back: Brayden Brummer, De Soto, senior; Tanner Duncan, Paola, senior; Christian Tosterud, Louisburg, senior

Punter: Max Garrett, De Soto, senior

SECOND TEAM

Defensive line: Austin Ormsby, Eudora, senior; Josh Diehl, De Soto, senior; Brandon Wilkes, Paola, senior; **Kiefer Tucker**, **Louisburg, senior**

Linebacker: Jameson McGinness, Eudora, senior; Mason Taulbee, De Soto, senior; Trevor Gress, De Soto, senior; Winston Davis, Paola, senior

Defensive back: Bobby Gill, De Soto, senior; Mason Bell, Spring Hill, senior; Ethan Temple, Baldwin, senior

Punter: Jon Bock, Eudora, senior

HONORABLE MENTION

Defensive line: Elijah Kennedy, Eudora, junior; Jeff Schartz, Paola, junior; Jake Miller, Paola, senior; Kip Rogers, Paola,

junior; Garrett Borth, Baldwin, senior; Tristan Schweda,
Baldwin, senior; Garrett Lowry, Louisburg, senior; Noah
Larson, Louisburg junior

Linebacker: Carter Neis, Eudora, junior; Jimmy Bichelmeyer, De Soto, senior; Colton Gleghorn, Paola, senior; Jacob James, Spring Hill, senior; Nolan Ewing, Spring Hill, junior; Zach Flowers, Baldwin, junior; Cy Hockey, Baldwin, junior; Will Ridley, Louisburg, senior

Defensive back: Drew Smith, Paola, senior; Seth Richmond, Paola, junior; Trajan McCormick, Spring Hill, senior; **Desmond Doles, Louisburg, senior; Blue Caplinger, Louisburg, junior; Brayden Gage, Louisburg, junior**

Punter: Seth Richmond, Paola, junior; Brennen Feeback, Spring Hill, junior

Louisburg sixth-grade football team takes second in KCFC



Members of the 2017 Louisburg sixth-grade tackle football team are (front row, from left): Blake Amren, Gage Gilliland, Brady Hickey, Luke Hill, Ayden McKain; (second row) J'Lee Collins, Caden Caplinger, Declan Battle, Hunter Heinrich, Jack

Anderson, Drake Crooks; (third row) Scott Thornton, Wyatt Holland, Brock Vohs, Dawson Rizzo, Jaymes Melton, Jackson Howard; (back row) coaches Kraig Hickey, Marc Gilliland, Lane Caplinger, Aaron Battle, Rob Vohs, Gabe Anderson and Joe Crooks.

A group of sixth-grade Louisburg football players banded together one final time as they took part in the Kansas City Football Club (KCFC) and competed against other programs from all across the Kansas City metro area.

The Wildcats more than held their own.

Louisburg won five of its first six games and finished the year with a 7-1 record and a second place finish in the KCFC. The 17-member Wildcat team racked up victories against teams from Shawnee Mission, Blue Valley and Olathe and put together their first winning season as a group.

"This was our team's best year at KCFC," coach Aaron Battle said. "I am very proud of all the hard work and dedication these young men put in over the years. This is the type of season that truly builds momentum for our players. This is the first year that we actually had a winning season so the timing couldn't have been better. They will start middle school football next year and they are super pumped about it. I can't wait to watch them continue to develop and grow as a team. They get better and better every year."

Through the first four weeks of the season, the Wildcats dominated their competition. Louisburg shutout each of its first four opponents, including a 36-0 win over Blue Valley North to open the season.

The Wildcats followed that up with a 24-0 win over Paola, a 30-0 victory against Olathe Northwest and a 34-0 win over Gardner-Edgerton. Louisburg gave up 22 points in its next

game, but the Wildcats pulled through to get a 30-22 victory over Blue Valley Southwest in week five.

Louisburg was dominant for much of the season as they scored 226 points through eight games and gave up only 60.

Week six provided the lone loss for the Wildcats as they fell 26-6 to Spring Hill, but responded well with a 30-6 victory over Shawnee Mission Northwest and a 36-6 win over Shawnee Mission West to close out the season.

"They have a lot of talent, and they are going to be extremely fun to watch, especially once they get to high school," coach Battle said of his team. "I love each of them and I am going to miss being on that field with them. I also want to thank the parents and assistant coaches. Our accomplishments on the field was also due to their dedication, sacrifices and support."

Members of the 2017 Wildcat sixth grade team are: Declan Battle, Jack Anderson, Jaymes Melton, Luke Hill, Wyatt Holland, J'Lee Collins, Brock Vohs, Scott Thornton, Hunter Heinrich, Brady Hickey, Caden Caplinger, Gage Gilliland, Jackson Howard, Drake Crooks, Ayden McKain, Dawson Rizzo and Blake Amren.

Louisburg was led by head coach Aaron Battle and assistant coaches Marc Gilliland, Gabe Anderson, Kraig Hickey, Lane Caplinger, Joe Crooks and Rob Vohs.

Paola ends Wildcats' season

on Senior Night



Louisburg senior Ben Minster looks to get a block during a kick return against Paola on Friday during Senior Night at Wildcat Stadium. Minster was one of 10 Louisburg seniors that were honored before the game.

The Louisburg High School football team found itself one win away from making the state playoffs for the third straight season.

Leave it to rival Paola to dash those hopes.

On Senior Night in Louisburg, the Wildcats couldn't stop the Panther offense as Paola put together two long drives in the second half to pull away for a 34-12 win over Louisburg. The loss ended Louisburg's season with a 6-3 record.

The defeat also meant the Wildcats had to say goodbye to their 10 seniors: Will Ridley, Garrett Lowry, Matt Holloway, Christian Tosterud, Mitchell Drew, Will Smith, Gillin Newell, Desmond Doles, Ben Minster and Alec Maler.

"I am proud of our kids," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "They have fought all year and they grew a lot. I am happy for our seniors that were able to continue to grow as a family and as a team. I am also proud of the younger kids to support them in their efforts as seniors.

"Sometimes we put too much emphasis on certain parts of the

game and there are a lot of ins and outs and stuff that doesn't show on the scoreboard that nobody sees, so I really think our kids grew a lot."

Louisburg got on the board first as it put together an 82-yard drive that resulted in a 6-yard touchdown run by junior Austin Moore. Although the extra point failed, the Wildcats still held a 6-0 lead late in the first quarter.



Senior Garrett Lowry makes a stop at the line of scrimmage Friday.

Paola answered quickly to start the second quarter on a 58-yard touchdown pass and then scored on a short touchdown run after the Panthers recovered a Louisburg fumble. Despite all that, the Wildcats trailed just 13-6 at halftime.

Penalties hurt the Wildcats through much of the game as they were flagged eight times for 97 yards, which ended up stalling

many of the Louisburg drives. The Wildcats also turned the ball over twice.

"It seemed like every play that was more than 2 yards came back because of a penalty," Ebenstein said. "Sometimes you just don't get the breaks and you have to find a way to make your own. Our kids hung tough, and it was a one possession game at half, but that third quarter was a killer."

The third quarter was a rough one for Louisburg.

Paola opened the second half on a seven-minute drive that went nearly 80 yards and ended on another short touchdown run. The Wildcats got the ball back, but went three and out, only to see the Panthers put together another six minute drive that went 60 yards and got another touchdown.



Charlie Koontz makes a tackle on a Paola running back Friday at Wildcat Stadium.

"We only ran like three offensive plays in the third and one of them was my fault because it was relayed in wrong," Ebenstein said. "Coach (Mike) Dumpert and the rest of the Paola staff are great coaches and they are going to find what works and go to it. Defensively, I think there was a point where we had four sophomores on the field and two of our seniors starters were out on defense due to an injury. We had some holes exposed, but hats off to Paola and they played well."

Louisburg snapped its scoring drought in the fourth quarter when quarterback Madden Rutherford found Doles for a 32-yard touchdown pass. Paola answered one more time with a touchdown scoring drive to seal the win and end the Wildcats' season.

It was an up and down year for the Wildcats, but Ebenstein, who is in his first year as head coach, saw a lot of growth from his team.

"Whether I am a head coach, or an assistant coach, I am going to do whatever I can for these kids and I just hope at the end of the day they grow as a family," Ebenstein said. "Before the game, I told them to just go play a perfect game. A lot of people think of a perfect game is doing everything right. I just wanted them to lay it all out there. I think our kids did everything they could. The scoreboard doesn't show a perfect game, but I don't think any of the kids left anything in the tank."

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SCORING SUMMARY

First quarter

L: Austin Moore 6 run (kick failed)

Second quarter

P: Brandon Wilkes 58 pass from Kurt Golubski (kick blocked)

P: Colton Gleghorn 4 run (Ryan Wokutch kick)

Third quarter

P: Gleghorn 5 run (Wokutch kick)

P: Drew Smith 3 run (Wokutch kick)

Fourth quarter

L: Desmond Doles 32 pass from Madden Rutherford (kick failed)

P: Golubski 1 run (Wokutch kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING — Will Ridley 9-38, Austin Moore 7-18, Blue Caplinger 1-16, Madden Rutherford 5-7. Totals: 22-79

PASSING - Madden Rutherford 6-14-133

RECEIVING — Ben Minster 4-95, Desmond Doles 2-38

TACKLES — Austin Moore 10, Charlie Koontz 9, Brayden Gage 5, Kohl Vogel 5, Will Ridley 5, Kiefer Tucker 5, Garrett Harding 5, Garrett Lowry 4, Desmond Doles 3, Blue Caplinger 2, Brayden White 2, Jorge Lebron 1, Noah Larson 1, Will Smith 1, Gillin Newell 1, Matt Holloway 1.