

# Week 1 Athlete of the Week: Declan Battle



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week one of the fall sports season, sponsored by Edward Jones-Craig Holtzen.

## DECLAN BATTLE, SENIOR, FOOTBALL

Louisburg senior Declan Battle had a game to remember last Friday during the Wildcats' 48-14 victory over Rogers Heritage. The Wildcat quarterback broke loose for five of the team's seven touchdowns on the night as he led Louisburg to victory in the season opener.

Battle combined for 235 yards of total offense, including 135 yards on the ground. He accomplished all that in just two-and-a-half quarters of action.

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday morning during the fall season and the winner is selected by Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.



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# Wildcat football hoping to run it back for another league title



*Louisburg senior quarterback Declan Battle returns for this third year under center after earning all-league and all-state honors last season.*

Last season was a memorable one for the Louisburg football team.

The Wildcats ran through Frontier League with an undefeated record and finished with their first league title since 2018. Although it ended with a loss to St. Thomas Aquinas in the playoffs, it was a successful run.

Louisburg hopes to have that same type of success, if not more, this season but the Wildcats will have a little different look to them. They said goodbye to a 16-member senior class, including several all-league and all-state players.

Still, that success and confidence has bled over into the 2023 season and the Wildcats are hoping it can continue what it started a year ago.

“I think it gave us some confidence and also helped establish the standard for where we want to be,” Louisburg coach Drew Harding said of last year’s finish. “The Frontier League is tough, so in order to compete for the league title you have to

be ready week in and week out.

“Honestly, without having played anyone else I’m not sure if we have an identity just yet. We were hoping to get an idea with the jamboree, but with the heat we obviously had to change course. I think we will find ourselves over the first few weeks of the season.”

Even though the roster will look a little different in 2023, there are still plenty of familiar faces on the Wildcat sideline and it starts under center.

Senior Declan Battle returns for his third season as the starting varsity quarterback and is coming off an impressive junior campaign. He finished with more than 1,700 yards of total offense and had 18 touchdowns.

That all led to a first-team all-league selection and was also named honorable mention all-state.

“Declan had a really good year for us last year,” Harding said. “I was very proud of the way he picked up a new offense and really played well in the run game and passing game for us. We are hoping he continues to develop, feels more confident in our system, and puts together another really good season for us.”

Battle also has a lot of his offensive weapons back from a season ago in junior tailback Ashton Moore and senior running back Wyatt Holland. He also returns a pair of all-league players at receiver in seniors Caden Caplinger and Hunter Heinrich, while junior Darby Van Eaton will see time at running back.



***Louisburg junior Ashton Moore returns after leading the team in tackles last season and earned first team all-league and all-state honors.***

Seniors Brody McGreer, Blake Amren, along with juniors Myles Vohs, Reid McCaskill and Josh Holtzen, could all see time at wide receiver throughout the year.

A big difference this season for the Wildcats will be on the line of scrimmage where they have to replace four of the five starting linemen from last year. Senior center Jaymes Melton is back to lead the group.

Seniors Jackson Howard, Ben O'Bryan, along with juniors Brayden Yoder, Miles Meek, Nate Capuro and sophomore Johnny Hendrickson could all see time on the offensive line.

Louisburg will also feature new players at the tight end position in senior Brock Vohs and junior Conlee Hovey.

“You know I think we have the bodies to help replace those guys up front from last year but we will find out for sure here in the first few weeks,” Harding said. “There is still some competition that is taking place along the lines and we will probably be playing several guys as we start the season at some spots.”

The defensive line will also feature a lot of new faces in Vohs, Hovey, Howard, Yoder, O’Bryan, Hendrickson, Meek and senior Drake Crooks.

However, the defensive leadership for Louisburg will come at the linebacker position. Moore and Holland will help anchor the defense after a strong 2022 season.

Moore, who was a first team all-state and all-league selection as a sophomore, returns for his junior season after leading the Wildcats in tackles last season with 114, including 12 for a loss.

Holland tallied 89 tackles last season, which earned him second team all-league honors and Harding likes what he has in his veteran linebackers.





***Senior Wyatt Holland returns as a starting linebacker and was named a second team all-league player last season.***

“Ashton and Wyatt I believe were both in the top three of our team in terms of tackles, so that kind of experience is nice to have back,” Harding said. “The nice thing about those guys is they can both really run. They can both make plays sideline to sideline. Last year was Wyatt’s first year ever playing linebacker and it was Ashton’s first year playing linebacker on the varsity level, so they both should feel much more confident this year. We need them to step up vocally on the defense and get everyone lined up and so far they have been doing a good job.”

In the secondary, the Wildcats return just two starters in Caplinger (safety) and Heinrich (cornerback). Battle, Caplinger, senior Brady Hickey and junior Lucas Swartz are all competing for a starting safety spot, while Heinrich, McGreer,

Vohs, McCaskill and junior Alex Saad will be the team's cornerbacks.

It will be a different type of season for the Wildcats, but the goals are still the same and that is to finish atop the league standings.

"Our expectations are that we will need to get better every week," Harding said. "We have a lot of new players along both sides of the line of scrimmage, so we hope to see big strides for both of those groups throughout the season. We want to put ourselves in a position to compete for another Frontier League title, and in order to do that we have to improve and play well each and every week."

That starts today as the Wildcats host Heritage High School from Rogers, Ark. The War Eagles are making the return trip this season after the Wildcats suffered a close loss at their place a season ago.

However, with a new season comes a clean slate and the players are excited to get the season going.

"Practices have been going well," Harding said. "The guys are extremely excited to get the season going and there was a boost in energy once we started a game week. I think everyone is ready to go against somebody other than ourselves."

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## **Wildcat fall teams underway with successful first week of**

# practice



***Louisburg senior Wyatt Holland takes a handoff from backup quarterback Alex Saad during a practice last week.***

Before the record setting heat and humidity that is currently smothering Louisburg and the surrounding areas came in, the Wildcat fall sports teams got in a solid first five days of practice last week.

The first day of practice opened the fall season on Aug. 15 as the Wildcat football, boys soccer, cross country and volleyball programs officially kicked off the season.

Participation numbers were up for most of the sports, while football, soccer and cross country had a good week's worth of practice outdoors. With heat and humidity at record levels this week, all outdoor sports will be forced to hold practices early in the morning.

It was a successful season for all four teams last year and it started with the Wildcat football program as they ran through the Frontier League with an undefeated record and earned its first league title since 2018.

The Wildcats currently have 76 players out for football under second-year coach Drew Harding, which about 10 more than a year ago.

"First couple days of practice have been going well," Harding said. "There is a lot of energy on the field during practice, which is great to have. You can tell they are happy to be



back playing football again.”

Harding kept his players busy over the summer to help prep them for the season. The Wildcats took part in several scrimmages, 7-on-7 and skill sessions, to go along with their normal team camp and weights.

“This allowed everyone to get on the same page and be ready to roll once we started practice in the fall,” Harding said. “The goal is that everything over the summer carries over and we can just continue to get better at what we do once the season starts.

“We want to continue to come together as a team and continue to build camaraderie. We also want to make sure we have the base schemes in all three phases installed and understood before we start putting in opponent specific plans. We want to see athletes compete and separate themselves from one another to show who is ready to play on Friday nights.”



***Louisburg sophomore Caileigh Kilgore goes through a hitting drill last week during tryouts.***

The Louisburg volleyball program is coming off another state tournament run that saw the Wildcats finish fourth at the Class 4A tourney. That success brought a lot of interest as 39 players tried out, and 32 are currently rostered between the three teams.

“The first three days of the season with tryouts were pretty great,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “Everyone came with positive attitudes and high energy to push through the challenges of tryouts. After the team was finalized, we got to work right away on Thursday. The energy in the gym is great, and everyone is aware of the high expectations we have for ourselves heading into the season. Both the girls and the coaches are excited to be back in the gym getting better every day.”

Wildcat volleyball also had a busy summer schedule the held a team camp to start, before competing in a summer league and held several open gyms in June and July.

Varsity level players traveled to the University of Nebraska team camp and also competed a tournament in Andale.

“While summer is busy with all kinds of activities, vacations and summer jobs, we appreciate the time and effort all of the girls put in to dedicate themselves to the team and the sport of volleyball,” Willer said. “It also gives us coaches more time to get to know them heading into the season and to develop relationships earlier on so we can get right into volleyball here in August.

“During these first few weeks we hope to foster a culture of competition in our gym where the girls are all challenging each other every single day. We are all on the same page with where we want to be at the end of the season, so during these first few weeks we are focused on building a strong foundation

that will help us get there with an emphasis on team bonding/connections, fundamentals, and conditioning.”



***Louisburg senior Emma Vohs is a returning state medalist for the Louisburg cross country team.***

The Louisburg cross country team also had a big season last year, especially on the girls side. The Wildcat girls qualified for state and Emma Vohs left Wamego with a state medal.

As far as numbers go, the cross country group is a little down this year with 22, but they still have high aspirations again.

“The runners are excited for the season,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “The girls team is planning for big things again this year and the ‘young’ boys team is looking great.”

Many of those runners have taken to the streets over the summer to get their work in as they prepare for another difficult slate of meets in 2023.



"We had a consistent group of both LHS and LMS runners all summer," Reece said. "Because of the good turnout, we can get going on the harder workouts earlier in the season."

"The beginning of the season always creates a challenge with runners being at different points of their base building. We look to build base for all and start working on racing skills and workouts as the weeks progress."



***Louisburg junior Emmett White goes through a drill last week at practice.***

The Louisburg soccer team will have some rebuilding to do this season as the Wildcats had to say goodbye to 15 seniors from a year ago.

There will certainly be several players to help fill the void as 41 athletes came out for soccer this fall.

"There's been a huge precedent set with the program, and it's definitely something that's been instilled in the players for

quite some time,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Since I’ve joined the program, the junior and senior leaders have been outstanding at organizing summer workouts and activities for the team. It’s been great seeing that sort of self-motivation and leadership from them. We’ve had enough time together as a program over the summer that the first days of tryouts have been smooth as can be. Very little instruction needed, and the guys have been able to jump right in with what we’re asking from them.”

The Wildcats opened their summer hosting a youth camp and then went right in to summer workouts. Louisburg also held its annual team camp to go along with weights sessions.

“With only two returning starters from last year, we’re going to have some growing pains for sure,” Bovaird said. “The first couple of weeks will need to be spent getting in match shape and gelling as a team with so many players being in new positions or at a new level. We open our season with Leavenworth, who was our final regular season game last year. Back then, both varsity and JV had awesome games, but those were totally different teams. We’ll see how well we’ve reloaded for this year, but I’m feeling pretty good.”

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## **In his final football game, Vincent shines for East in Shrine Bowl**



***Louisburg's Nathan Vincent started for the East defense in the Kansas Shrine Bowl last month at Fort Hays State University and had a big tackle late in the contest.***

HAYS – Nathan Vincent said goodbye to the sport he loved and did so going up against some of the top seniors in the state of Kansas.

He started playing football in elementary school and loved it ever since. Still, Vincent was taken on a different path as he signed with Iowa State to join the track and field program.

Vincent was selected to play in the 50th annual Kansas Shrine Bowl on July 15 at Fort Hays State University, in what turned out to be his last-ever football game.

"Being able to represent Louisburg one more time at the Shrine Bowl will be an experience that I will be forever grateful for," Vincent said. "It's something I've seen great players do for years, and to be able to play in it myself was surreal."

Another Louisburg graduate, Jase Hovey, was also selected to play in the game but was unable to attend to due football obligations at South Dakota.

Although Vincent's East team lost a close one to the West, 21-20, he played a big role on the East defense and helped keep his team in the game.

Vincent, who played on the offensive line during another all-star game earlier this season, wasn't expecting much playing time when he got there, but he got more than he bargained for.



"I loved playing defense for the East squad and I prefer it over offensive line almost always," Vincent said. "I felt I played some of my best football, honestly. I came into the camp thinking that I would maybe play in the fourth quarter, but I ended up starting and playing almost the entire game. Playing that well against that caliber of players was so much fun and I felt very proud after the game."

Late in the fourth quarter, the West side was trying to run out the clock and faced a 4th-down and 1. With the game on the line, Vincent came through for the East.

On a run to the outside, Vincent read the play and shot through to make a game-saving tackle that gave the East offense one more shot to win it. It turned out to be his last-ever tackle.

"We knew we needed a stop right there if we even had a chance to win and they loaded up my side of the line with an extra three guys and I knew right where the ball was going to go," Vincent said. "It reminded me of when we played Tonganoxie either last year or two years ago, when they would do a heavy set and run right at it. I just read the play well and filled the open lane and stopped them. That being my last tackle is something I'll never forget."

As memorable as the game was for Vincent, it was his time preparing for the Shrine Bowl that left a lasting impact on him. The Shrine Bowl is 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 \$3.7M to Shriners Hospitals for Children.

In the days prior to the game, Vincent and the rest of the Shrine Bowl players had a chance to meet with some of the patients and he quickly realized what this game was all about.

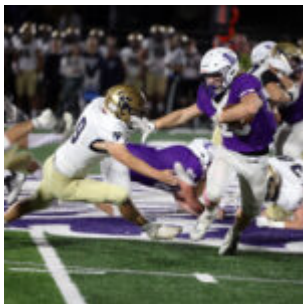
"The Shrine Bowl experience overall was one of the coolest and

most memorable things I have ever gotten to be apart of," Vincent said. "They always say that the Shrine Bowl is so much more than a game but I never knew how true that was until I got there. We were educated on what the Shriners hospital is and even got to meet and listen to some of the patients.

"I never knew how much of an amazing organization and group of people the Shriners organization is. Everyone I met there was kind and extremely passionate about what they do. It was just awesome."

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## Van Eaton signs with Dodge City Community College football



***After a big senior season, Louisburg's Riley Van Eaton will look to make an impact with the Dodge City Community College football this fall.***

Riley Van Eaton was one of the smaller players on the Louisburg football team this past season, but he made a big impact for the Wildcats.

Van Eaton was the team's starting running back, and even at 5 feet, 7 inches, was a load to bring down for the opposition. He put in the work and translated that into a first team all-

league player and also earned all-state honors.

As happy as he was with that season – Van Eaton wanted more. He wanted the opportunity to play college football.

Van Eaton will get his chance this fall as he signed with Dodge City Community College and he is ready to make an impact with the Conquistadors program.

“I started falling in love with football in eighth grade and just kept growing into a running back type,” Van Eaton said. “Signing to Dodge is a blessing and I plan to prove myself and see where the future takes me.”

The 2023 Louisburg graduate will join the Dodge City team and compete in the Jayhawk Conference, which is one of the toughest conferences in the country.

Van Eaton knows he still has work to do to improve, but he is hoping to get playing time at the running back spot this season.

“Dodge is a good school and I really think they will help me get better,” Van Eaton said. “Dodge will also help me find some good options in the future. It will definitely be a challenge, but I am looking forward to it.

“Terry Karg (head coach) is a very nice person and seems very organized. I will be fighting for a starting spot, and I like a challenge. I am just looking forward to the opportunity.”

Van Eaton was one of the Wildcats’ top offensive weapons this past season. He earned first team All-Frontier League honors at running back and was also an honorable mention all-state selection.

He carried the ball 172 times for 1,043 yards and 15 touchdowns. He also had 188 yards receiving out of the backfield as he helped the Wildcats to an undefeated Frontier League title under first-year head coach Drew Harding.

“I had a great senior year and I just want to thank all the coaches,” Van Eaton said. “Harding is the best coach you can ask for. He is very patient, understanding and gives people chances. He really taught me a lot.”

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## **Dobbins named Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year**



***Louisburg senior Mason Dobbins was voted by the LHS head coaches as the 2023 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year***

Mason Dobbins had a senior season to remember when it came to athletics.

Dobbins left it all on the field/court/track during his final campaign with the Wildcats and he put his stamp on it. Whether it was winning a league title in football, helping the Wildcats to a state runner-up finish in track or earning all-league honors in three sports – Dobbins enjoyed it all.

Those were just some of the reasons Dobbins was named the 2023 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year.

“It means a lot to me to be named athlete of the year,”

Dobbins said. "It feels good to that know that all your hard work pays off."

He certainly put in a lot of work and it showed throughout the 2022-23 school year. It started during football season as the team's starting wide receiver.

The Wildcats finished as undefeated Frontier League Champions and Dobbins played a big role in that. Dobbins earned first team All-Frontier League honors at wide receiver with 25 catches, 382 yards and four touchdowns. He was also named honorable mention all-state.

Dobbins returned to the basketball court after taking a couple years off and his 6-foot-7 frame made an immediate impact as he led the team with 7.6 rebounds a game to go along with 1.5 steals and a block per contest. He was later named to the Frontier League All-Defensive Team.



***Mason Dobbins was awarded the 2023 Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Year award. Pictured with Dobbins is his coaches (from left) Ty Pfannenstiel, Andy Wright and Drew Harding.***

However it was the track where he made his biggest impact.

Dobbins won the state championship in the high jump, and earlier in the year, broke the school record with a jump of 6 feet, 7 inches. He was a state runner-up in the 110-meter hurdles and also took third in the 200-meter dash.

He was also a part of the 4×100-meter relay that also medaled third and set a new school record earlier in the year. In all, Dobbins won nine state medals in his Wildcat career.

At the state meet, Dobbins racked up 30 points to help Louisburg to a state runner-up finish as the Wildcats lost to Andale by just half-a-point.

“This past season was my best one yet,” Dobbins said. “In football we were league champs. In basketball, I thought I played way better than I thought I would. Then in track, I was a state champ and we almost won a state championship. It was a lot of fun.”

As easy as he made it look at times, competing in three sports has its challenges.

“It’s definitely something that I am proud of,” Dobbins said. “Three sports can be a lot on the body, and for me to go without an injury the whole year, was a blessing.”

Now that his high school career is finished, he is looking forward to starting a new chapter in his life – with the Northwest Missouri State track and field program.

“I am so excited to start my track career at Northwest,” Dobbins said. “It’s a whole different world than what high school track is, but I am ready for it.”

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# Ryals, Vincent represent Louisburg in GKCFCA all-star game



***Layne Ryals (33) and Nathan Vincent (51) pose for a picture with Louisburg coach Drew Harding following the Greater Kansas City Football Coaches Association all-star game on June 16 at Ray-Pec High School.***

Layne Ryals and Nathan Vincent were part of a lot of big moments on the football field, including helping the Wildcats to an undefeated Frontier League title last season.

As they both go their separate ways for college, they were reunited on the football field one last time as the two Louisburg players were selected to play in the Greater Kansas City Football Coaches Association All-Star Game.

The contest pitted the best players from the Kansas City metro area from Kansas against the Missouri side on June 16 at Ray-Pec High School, and both players were honored to take part in the game.

"I'm very very thankful to have been able to play in that all star game," Vincent said. "I loved every second of playing football again and especially because I was going up against some of the top talent in Kansas and Missouri."

The two players have played football together since elementary school, so for both to have a chance to represent Louisburg

made a for special night – to say the least.



***Layne Ryals gets a punt off for Team Kansas during the June 16 all-star game at Ray-Pec High School. (Photo courtesy of A.J. Hildreth)***

“To be selected for an all star game and compete against Missouri was a big honor,” Ryals said. “I’ve played football with Nathan since the second grade and we’ve watched each other grow as people and players. It was an awesome experience for the both of us to be able to represent Kansas. It was my last high school football game, so it was it was a little emotional when the game was over, but it makes me excited to play at the next level.”

Ryals, who is playing college football at Missouri S&T this fall, handled the kicking duties for team Kansas. He did the kickoffs and was the team’s punter.

“It was my first time playing on a team and being able to focus on just being a specialist rather than playing defense too,” Ryals said “The coaching staff brought in coach (Spencer) Webb, a coach I have worked with in the past at Punt 21. He was able to coach me throughout the week and help me get ready for the game.”



***Nathan Vincent played left tackle for Kansas during the GKCFCA all-star game at Ray-Pec High School. (Photo courtesy of A.J. Hildreth)***

Vincent, on the other hand, saw a lot of time on the offensive line at left tackle. Even though, Kansas eventually lost a close contest, 16-8, Vincent learned a lot going up against some big talent.

“The whole experience was amazing,” Vincent said. “They had me play left tackle and it was some of the most fun playing football I’ve ever had. We were all just playing for fun and obviously we wanted to beat Missouri but it really let me enjoy football for different reasons than during the regular high school season.

“I really felt like I played some of my best football at the game. It felt amazing to pancake kids that have almost 100 pounds on me.”

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# 2023 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year Nominees



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

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

Below are the nominees for the Male Athlete of the Year award in alphabetical order by last name. Congrats to all those who were nominated and best of luck!





## Kaven Bartlett – Senior – Wrestling and Soccer

Kaven Bartlett competed on the Louisburg wrestling and boys soccer team, but Bartlett was a fixture on the mat for the Wildcat wrestling program.

Bartlett qualified for state at 138 pounds and became a 3-time state qualifier for Louisburg and was a state medalist in 2022. He finished with a 119-45 career record and was a two-time team captain and four-year letter winner. Those 119 wins are fifth in program history and he has 158 career takedowns and 726.5 career points, which is both third in team history. He was named the 2023 LHS Wrestler of the Year.

Bartlett was also a defender on the Wildcat soccer team his past season. The Wildcats advanced to the regional championship game.



## Declan Battle – Junior – Football and Baseball

Declan Battle had big seasons for both the Wildcat football and baseball programs.

Under the lights on the football field, Battle was the Wildcat starting quarterback as he led his team to an undefeated Frontier League championship. The dual-threat quarterback scored 23 total touchdowns and totaled more than 1,700 yards. That performance led him to a first-team All-Frontier League, along with all-state honors.

On the diamond, Battle was the Wildcats' starting centerfielder and leadoff hitter. He scored 32 runs on the year, which is a Wildcat program record. Battle also recorded a .429 average to go along with five doubles and three triples. He also stole 17 bases. His performance also earned him second team All-Frontier League and all-state honors.





## **Mason Dobbins – Senior – Football, Basketball and Track and Field**

Louisburg senior Mason Dobbins was a fixture for three Wildcat programs this past season. Dobbins was the starting wide receiver on the football field, starting forward on the basketball team and a state medalist for the track program.

Dobbins stood out the most in the track and field arena. He qualified for state in four events and medaled in all four as he helped the Wildcats to a state runner-up finish this past May.

Dobbins won the state championship in the high jump, and earlier in the year, broke the school record with a jump of 6 feet, 7 inches. He was a state runner-up in the 110-meter hurdles and also took third in the 200-meter dash. He was also a part of the 4×100-meter relay that also medaled third and set a new school record earlier in the year. In all, Dobbins has won nine state medals in his Wildcat career.

On the football field, Dobbins earned first team All-Frontier

League honors at wide receiver with 25 catches, 382 yards and four touchdowns. He also earned honorable mention all-state honors.

On the basketball court, Dobbins was named to the All-Frontier League defensive team. He led the Wildcats with 7.6 rebounds a game to go along with 1.5 steals and 1 block per contest.



## **Cade Gassman – Senior – Soccer, Basketball and Track and Field**

Cade Gassman was a starter, or key contributor, for three Wildcat programs during 2022-23 school year. Gassman was the starting midfielder and captain for the soccer team, starting guard on the basketball court and a jumper for the track and field program.

Gassman made his biggest impact on the pitch for Louisville. As a midfielder, Gassman drew a lot of attention from the opposition as he finished with five goals and four assists on

the season to lead the Wildcats to the regional title match. In his career, he is one of the more prolific scorers in school history.

The Louisburg senior finished with 47 career goals, which is second in program history and was third in school history with 26 career assists. His 120 career points is also second in Wildcat history. He is a four-time all-state and all-Frontier League first team selection.

On the hardwood, Gassman was the starting guard for the Wildcats and he recorded 39 rebounds and had 22 assists to go along with 14 steals. On the track, Gassman was a state qualifier in the high jump for Louisburg and finished 11th overall at state.



## **Nathan Vincent, Senior, Football and Track and Field**

Louisburg senior Nathan Vincent played big roles for both the



Wildcat football team and track and field program. Vincent was a starting lineman for the Wildcat football team and a state medalist in track.

On the football field, Vincent started on both sides of the ball as he earned all-state and all league honors. He finished with 80 tackles as a defensive end to go along with 6.5 sacks and 8.5 tackles for a loss. Vincent was a key member of the offensive line as he helped the Wildcats to more than 33 points per game. He earned first team all-league offensive league honors and second team-defense. He also recorded first team all-state honors and was selected to play in the Kansas Shrine Bowl.

Vincent was the Wildcats' top thrower for the track and field program. Vincent recorded three state medals as he helped Louisburg to a state runner-up team finish. At state, Vincent medaled third in the shot put, fifth in the discus and sixth in the javelin. In all, Vincent has won five career state medals, with three coming in the javelin.



# **Colyer Wingfield, Senior, Basketball, Track and Field**

Louisburg senior Colyer Wingfield had a big season for both the Wildcat basketball team and track program. Wingfield was the leading scorer for the Wildcat basketball program, and was a part of two state relays in track.

Wingfield earned a lot of success on the hardwood as he was named to the All-Frontier League second team. He led the Wildcats in scoring at 17.4 points per game and pulled down nearly six rebounds a contest.

On the track, Wingfield helped the 4×100 relay and 4×400 relay to state medals as both finished third at the state meet last month. The 4×100 relay set a new school record in the process. He also did the long and triple jumps for the Wildcats.

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## **Pfannenstiel named new LHS AD; resigns boys basketball post**



*Louisburg boys basketball coach Ty Pfannenstiel will take over the school's activities director role next school year. He also resigned his basketball position after coaching the*

### ***Wildcats for the last six years.***

Beginning next school year, Louisburg High School activities will have a little different look to it – especially at the top.

Ty Pfannenstiel will serve as the school's new activities director and will take over for current AD, Michael Pickman, who will focus on his assistant principal duties and curriculum.

Pfannenstiel, who has been the boys basketball coach for the last six years, resigned his post to take on the activities director position. He also stepped down as an assistant football coach.

Currently the weight room instructor, Pfannenstiel will spend half his day teaching and the other half in the AD role.

All of the moves were approved during Monday's meeting of the USD 416 Board of Education.

"This is very exciting for me," Pfannenstiel said. "It's definitely going to be a change. I have been a teacher and a coach for 18 years. I still get to be a teacher half-time, and now I get to step into a new role as an administrator. It is going to be all sports and activities and I am looking forward to the new direction."

As for Pickman, he gets the opportunity to focus more on the academic side as a full-time assistant principal. He was hired as an assistant principal/ activities director in April of 2020.

"I am very excited to commit more fully to the assistant principal role as education and curriculum have always been my true passion," Pickman said. "Being able to support the teachers, students, and administrative staff by providing data, feedback, and assessing teaching and learning goals and



initiatives in the building and district aligns with that passion and the opportunity arose to allow for that. I hope to enable and promote continued growth in the various curriculums and initiatives and structures that make Louisburg a fantastic district in a supportive community.

“Ty has experience and is passionate about athletics and activities. As it is where his passion is, I have every confidence he will do a fantastic job in his new role and look forward to witnessing where he takes our programs moving forward.”

Pickman took over LHS activities at a difficult time as the school was coming back from COVID-19 and the all challenges it presented. As tough as that situation was, he appreciated the relationships he built.

“I have thoroughly enjoyed my role as activities director and was presented a fantastic growth opportunity and am grateful for being given it,” Pickman said. “I had a goal of being present for athletes and coaches and for the patrons, so I hope people saw that presence. I was blessed to have great leadership in place in our coaches and sponsors, and tried to support them best by advocating for their needs and supporting them to do their job of being great role models and passing on their passion and knowledge to students.

“Ultimately, I am most proud of our student athletes and activity participants and being part of their journey. I believe that sports are an extension of the classroom and I wanted to help ensure that character and sportsmanship were just as important and success, and I am overjoyed to have a wealth of memories where our fans, students, participants, and coaches and sponsors proved that to be true of LHS.”

While taking on the challenge of being a new administrator is one he is looking forward to, leaving his coaching roots behind was a difficult decision for Pfannenstiel.

In 2021, Pfannenstiel led the Wildcat boys basketball team to the Class 4A state championship game and finished as the state runner-up.

“That was definitely the biggest thing that was holding me back,” Pfannenstiel said. “I love basketball and the kids that I have worked with. There is a group coming up that I really enjoy coaching, and leaving that behind was one of the biggest challenges for me. Whoever takes over the program, I think it will be good transition for them because they will have a great group of kids to work with.

“Originally, I was going to be allowed to coach a sport and they didn’t want to take coaching away from me. The more I thought about it, if I want to do a good job at this, I need to focus on being the AD and that will be something that will benefit me and all the other activities.”

Pfannenstiel believes the move is a good one for the school in general as it will allow Pickman and principal Amy VanRheen to focus more on the academic side of things.

“This is something that is definitely needed,” Pfannenstiel said. “Our administrators are so busy with all the stuff they do during the school day, but they are also going to all the activities as well. Hopefully this will be a big help for Mrs. VanRheen and Mr. Pickman.”

Although he won’t official start his new position till next school year, Pfannenstiel is already starting to transition into his new role – one that is looking forward to.

“My job in the weight room and coaching has all been about sports,” he said. “That is what entices me about this job is that I am still going to be all about sports and activities. I just want to be a support for our coaches and our athletes and be advocate for our students.”

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# Newell excited to grow with South Dakota football program



*Louisburg senior Mack Newell recently signed his letter of intent to play football with the University of South Dakota. Newell was an all-league and all-state tight end this past season.*

During his sophomore and junior seasons, Mack Newell worked himself into one of the best goalies in the Class 4-1A for the Louisburg soccer team

However, in his final year of high school, Newell wanted to give football a try. So, he took his 6-foot-4, 250-pound frame to the gridiron to help the Louisburg football team.

As it turned out, Newell's gamble on himself paid off and he turned that into a Division I opportunity. During a signing ceremony last month, Newell signed his letter of intent to play football at the University of South Dakota.

Newell will join teammate Jase Hovey, who also signed with South Dakota, on the Vermillion (S.D.) campus this fall.

"Being able to play college football is an absolute blessing," Newell said. "College football wasn't always the ultimate goal of mine. For a while it was baseball, then soccer, but I fell in love with the football when I decided to come out my senior

year. There are so many people that helped me better myself throughout my senior season and I can't thank them enough.

"To be honest, it still hasn't really settled in that I'm able to play Division I football, it almost doesn't feel real. From the time I made my mind up I was playing football until now, so much hard work has been put in. It's amazing for me to see that the hard work has truly paid off."

The decision to leave a successful stint wasn't an easy one for Newell. He was an all-league and all-state goalie for the Wildcats, but wanted to try something different.

That came on the football field as a tight end and defensive lineman for the Wildcats as Newell worked his way to all-league and all-state status there as well. That eventually worked its way into several collegiate offers.

"Transitioning from soccer to football wasn't the easiest thing ever," Newell said. "There were many people who doubted me and didn't think I would be successful on the football field. That only fueled my fire and pushed me to work even harder. At times I questioned myself if the decision was right, but I stayed the course and trusted the process. I can't thank my teammates and coaches enough for welcoming me with open arms onto the team and helping me develop into a better player each and everyday. I know this wouldn't have been possible without them.

"This season was by far the most enjoyable season I've ever been apart of. Being able to be crowned Frontier League champs was a goal we were striving for all year. Being able to be recognized as an all league and all state player also helped me out a lot. I have learned so much through just one season and I can't wait to learn more and grow my skill set in the upcoming years."

During the team's Frontier League championship season, Louisburg head coach Drew Harding knows Newell was a big part

of the team's undefeated league season.



***Louisburg senior Mack Newell signed his letter of intent to play football at South Dakota. Sitting next to Mack is his mother Molly Strubbe and father Wesley Newell. Standing (from left) is Louisburg assistant coach Joel McGhee, head coach Drew Harding and assistants Kade Larson and Jake Hinson.***

"I am so glad Mack decided to come back out and play football his senior year," Harding said. "We would not have had the success we did without Mack making that decision. Mack's size and strength were noticeable right away on the football field. With his frame and his strength Mack also had a lot of interests from schools.

"I am so excited for Mack to continue his football career and it is awesome to see him have the opportunity to play at South Dakota after one varsity season. I am excited to see his development over the years and the type of player he turns himself into."

Newell had different options to choose from when it came down where to play college football. However, when made the journey up to South Dakota, it seemed the best fit for him to take the next step in his growth.



He visited with Hovey in late January and both players offered their commitments up shortly after.

“The second I stepped foot on campus in Vermillion, I knew it was going to be home,” Newell said. “The facilities were absolutely amazing, and we also get 24/7 access to those as well. The campus itself was amazing because everything was very close to each other and that makes it very convenient to get to and from classes and practices. The university just did a multi-million dollar renewal to the football dome building. It was really cool to see and that was another aspect that attracted me to the university as well.

“Another thing that drew me towards the school was the fact that I get to play college football with Jase. Not many people can say they got to play Division 1 football with their best friend, and I truly think that is something special that I will hold onto for a long time.”

Newell also hopes to improve at the tight end positions and is excited to work under his new coaches.

“The coaches on the staff were amazing as well,” he said. “My position coach is a former coach at Cincinnati when they made it to the college football playoff. He was also a coach at West Virginia so I think him having that coaching experience is going to help me so much in growing my game throughout my time at South Dakota.

“They have been really clear about where they see me fitting in the program. I will be continuing playing tight end and they have told me that they think I can come in and compete right away. They don’t necessarily have a number one TE in the room right now, and that position is kind of up in the air. There is always a good chance that as a freshman I will redshirt, but I’m going into this year pushing as hard as I can to get playing time as soon as possible.”