

Hovey ready to make his mark with South Dakota football



Louisburg senior Jase Hovey made it official last month when he signed his letter of intent to play football at the University of South Dakota.

Jase Hovey was all set to live out his college football dream at the University of Kansas.

Hovey committed to the Jayhawk program as a walk-on last December and the idea of playing Division I football was something he has always strived for.

“Playing college football has been a dream and goal of mine since i was a little kid,” Hovey said. “I always knew I wanted to play football at the highest level I could and it’s truly been a blessing to get the opportunities I have. It’s all because my coaches and teammates have pushed me to be my best all four years of high school football.”

While Hovey still gets to enjoy what Division I football has to offer, the destination has changed.

In late January, Hovey decommitted from the Jayhawks and committed to South Dakota instead. He made it official last month when he signed his letter of intent to play football for the Coyotes during a signing ceremony at Louisburg High School.

Hovey will join Louisburg teammate Mack Newell in South Dakota

as they begin their college football journeys.

“While I originally had committed to play at Kansas, South Dakota drew me in the very first time I stepped on campus,” Hovey said. “After meeting my position coach and defensive coordinator, I immediately knew how much they valued me and that they are going to give me everything they have to help me grow as a student athlete as well as trying to get me to the next level beyond college.

“I flipped my commitment because I knew this was the best decision I could make for myself. I get to join my teammate and best friend Mack Newell on the football field as well which is a vision we always had together and truly a dream come true.”

Hovey visited South Dakota with Newell in late January and the two Wildcats more than enjoyed their visits to Coyote program.



Louisburg senior Jase Hovey signed his letter of intent in February to play football at the University of South Dakota. Seated next to Jase are his parents Jodi and Shane. Standing (from left) Louisburg assistant coach Joel McGhee, Jase's brother Conlee Hovey, Louisburg head coach Drew Harding and Louisburg assistants Kade Larson and Jake Hinson.

South Dakota, which plays in the Division 1 FCS level, provided Hovey all he needed to see.

"I knew South Dakota was the best fit for me immediately after taking my official visit," Hovey said. "The coaching staff was unbelievable in their efforts for me and were able to show me exactly what vision they had in place for me to succeed. They have excellent academics as well. I knew it was my home the second my official visit was over.

Hovey has been a big part of the Wildcat defense the last three years from the safety spot. He turned in a special season this past year as he led the Wildcat secondary with 58 tackles and two interceptions.

All that led to first team All-Frontier League and all-state recognition. He was also selected to represent Louisburg in the Kansas Shrine Bowl later this summer.

"Jase was huge for our defense over the years," Louisburg head coach Drew Harding said. "We switched defenses a couple years ago because we knew Jase could really run the alley well and make plays from his free safety spot. Jase is going to leave a big hole for us to fill and someone will need to step up and fill in his shoes.

"He had a lot of interest from a lot of schools and I am very excited for him to have made his choice in South Dakota. He has the size and the athletic ability to play big time college football so I am very excited to see what he does over the next few years."

With the change to the college level also comes a new position for Hovey. He will make the transition from safety to linebacker and it is one he is looking forward to learning more about.

"The coaches believe my frame and athletic ability will be best fit at linebacker for the college level and I couldn't be

more excited to learn a new position,” Hovey said. “I could be redshirting, but determined by my performance in camp and if the team has a role worth using a year of my eligibility on as the season goes on. I would prefer to redshirt to get my mind and body ready to compete at the next level, but I will do whatever is best for the team as the season goes on.”

As for what he wants to accomplish during his time at South Dakota, Hovey is ready to help the Coyotes reach the highest level.

“I have already set a lot of goals for when I get to step on campus in June,” he said. “My biggest goal would be winning a national championship and I can’t wait to start working towards it with my future teammates. Some personal goals I have set for myself is to eventually earn a starting role and become a first team all-conference and All-American linebacker.

“At the end of my college career if the opportunity presented itself to play at the highest level, it’s something I’ve always worked for and would love to pursue.”

Ryals ready to kick his way onto the college football stage at Missouri S&T



Louisburg senior Layne Ryals signed his letter of intent earlier this month to play football at Missouri S&T this coming fall.

Kicking a football is nothing new to Layne Ryals. It is something he has done for most of his young life.

Ryals doesn't appear to stopping anytime soon, either.

During a signing ceremony on Feb.1, Ryals made it official in front of family and friends at Louisburg High School. Ryals signed his letter of intent to play football for Missouri S&T.

"It is a dream I have had since I started playing in the second grade," Ryals said of the opportunity to play college football. "It is really surreal and it has all happened really quickly."

The Louisburg senior was one of the top kickers – not only in the Frontier League – but in the state as well. Ryals earned all-league and all-state kicking honors following the Wildcats' season that ended with a Frontier League championship.

Ryals nailed 5 of 7 field goal attempts this past season, to go along with 38 of 39 extra point attempts. He made several big kicks for the Wildcats throughout the year.

"Layne was a huge part of who we were over the last few years," Louisburg football coach Drew Harding said. "Obviously, Layne was a really good specialist for us handling all kicking duties but he was also a really good defensive player for us. He was the brains of our defense a lot of times

and we will definitely miss him in that aspect for sure.

"I'm very excited for Layne to kick at Missouri S&T. This is something he has worked hard at for a long time and I know he was interested in going there from the start."



Louisburg senior Layne Ryals signed his letter of intent on Feb. 1 to play football at Missouri S&T. Sitting next Layne are his parents Jason Ryals and Janelle Ryals, along with his brother Grant, who videoed in. Standing (from left) is Louisville assistant Joel McGhee, head coach Drew Harding, along with assistants Pete Skakal, Kade Larson, Jake Hinson and Ty Pfannenstiel.

Kicking is something Ryals has worked at for years, ever since he was out practicing in his front yard with a pretty special coach.

"When I first got into football, my mom (Janelle) was also playing football at the time and she was the kicker for the team," Ryals said. "I grew up in a soccer family and it has always been something that I have practiced and worked at."

"We used to practice kickoffs in the front yard. When we first started when I was little, they would go about 10 yards. Obviously, it went a little further as I got older."

Ryals registered several touchbacks during the high school season and didn't give the opponent a chance to return kicks on a regular basis.

He hopes to do the same for Missouri S&T, a Division II program based out of Rolla, Mo.

"They said I had a good chance of playing as a freshman – kicking and punting," Ryals said "I definitely have to work at it because there is always going to be competition. I hope to be able to do something as freshman, whether it is just kickoffs, punting or just field goals. I know I need to put in a lot of work for that."

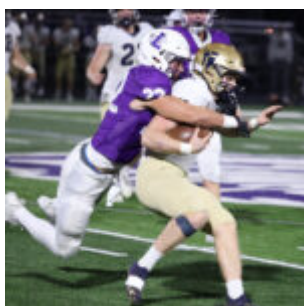
The Louisburg senior visited a few schools, and sent tapes to others in hopes of garnering interest following his junior season. He spent time attending camps, or just working on his own with his long snapper and holder – J.R. Rooney and Corbin Hamman.

All that led to an opportunity with Missouri S&T, which seemed to be the perfect fit for Ryals and his educational career.

"I want to use my football skills to help pay for a good education that I can use in my future," Ryals said. "I wasn't looking for anything crazy. I knew that engineering is what I wanted to do so I looked at about every D-1 and D-2 engineering school in the Midwest. Went to camps all summer and Missouri S&T was the one that showed the most interest in me and believed in me.

"S&T is one of the top engineering schools in the United States. The campus is beautiful and all the buildings are super advanced. The coaching staff is great and they had a pretty good season last year. They have a lot of good players coming up too so it should be fun."

Hovey selected to Kansas Shrine Bowl



Louisburg senior Jase Hovey was named to the Kansas Shrine Bowl this past Sunday and will represent on the Wildcats on the East squad later this summer.

Jase Hovey has already received a lot of postseason accolades that include all-state selections by four different publications, including first team honors by the Kansas Football Coaches Association.

Hovey received another big honor last Sunday.

The Louisburg senior was selected to play in the Kansas Shrine Bowl and represent the Wildcats later this summer in the all-star game played at Fort Hays State.

“It is a huge honor and I am extremely blessed to have one last opportunity to represent Louisburg,” Hovey said. “This is not a personal award. It speaks volumes to how incredible my teammates, coaches, and community are and I wouldn’t have had the opportunity to do this without each and every one of them. This honor means everything to me and I hope I can make my teammates and community proud.”

Hovey, who was the Wildcats’ starting safety this past season, led the Louisburg secondary with 58 tackles to go along with

two interceptions, including one for a touchdown earlier in the year against Paola.

The last Wildcat player named to the Shrine Bowl was Andy Hupp in 2021. Garrett Harding (2020), Austin Moore (2019), Kiefer Tucker (2019), Mason Koechner (2017) and Anders Vance (2016) were also recent Louisburg representatives.



Jase Hovey earned all-state honors by four different publications this past season before being selected to the Kansas Shrine Bowl.

“To get selected to play in the Shrine Bowl is a huge honor,” Louisburg football coach Drew Harding said. “It’s a game played for a great purpose with the best football players across the entire state and all classes. I’m excited for, not only Jase to get the chance to play in the game, but for Jase to represent Louisburg football on this stage.”

All Shrine Bowl events are produced and presented to benefit Shriners Children's. In 2022, the Kansas Shrine Bowl donated \$125,000 to Shriners Children's. Shriners Children's offers care for a range of orthopedic issues, as well as care for burn injuries, craniofacial conditions, spine care and spinal cord injuries, colorectal and gastrointestinal care, and sports medicine.

Children up to the age of 18 are eligible for care and receive all services in a family-centered environment, regardless of the patients' ability to pay. The 50th Kansas Shrine Bowl Presented by Mammoth will be played at Lewis Field Stadium, on the campus of Fort Hays State University, on Saturday, July 15 at 7 p.m

The Kansas Shrine Bowl is an all-star high school senior, East vs. West, football game put on each year in Kansas, by the Kansas Shrine. It is a 501(c) 3 non-profit charity that produces annual events and related activities, with net proceeds benefiting Shriners Hospitals for Children, now known as Shriners Children's. The Kansas Shrine Bowl has donated over \$3.7 million to Shriners Children's.

The game has been played throughout Kansas each summer since 1974. Host cities have included Lawrence, Manhattan, Wichita, Topeka, Hays, Emporia, Pittsburg, Dodge City and Hutchinson. The West football team camp will be held at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas, and the East team camp will be held at Ottawa University in Ottawa, Kansas.

Beginning in 1974, the flagship event has been the East/West All-Star Football Game. As of 2022, the West leads the series 30-17, and there have been two ties. Recent NFL alumni include Cody Whitehair (Chicago Bears). Additional notable alumni include former All-Pro wide receiver Jordy Nelson, former All-Pro NFL defensive back Terrance Newman, NFL Hall of Famer Barry Sanders, former Kansas State and Kansas City Chiefs linebacker Gary Spani, former Big 12 Defensive Player of the

Year and Super Bowl Champion linebacker Mark Simoneau and many others.

Top 10 Louisburg Sports Stories of 2022



It was a successful, and eventful, 2022 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 a few programs brought back state hardware.

Below are the top stories from 2022, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the writeup is the link to the actual story from the event.

When putting the list together, I took a lot of things into account – whether it was team vs. individual, popularity of the sport, historical achievements and the interest it drew on the web site.

This year was a blast to cover and I am looking forward to seeing what 2023 will bring. Thank you to everyone for their support and can't wait for it all to begin again.



10. Louisburg golf qualifies for state

FORT SCOTT – As the scores were rolling in, the Louisburg golf team was a little worried.

The Wildcats were in jeopardy of not qualifying for state after a few of the golfers didn't have the scores they were hoping for in the Class 4A regional tournament in Fort Scott.

Chanute and Independence had already assured themselves of a spot, but the third place team was up in the air as the top three teams automatically qualify for state.

As it turned out, the Wildcats had nothing to worry about as they edged Paola by four strokes to finish in third with a 357 to secure their third consecutive spot in the 4A state tournament.

Seniors A.J. Arriola, Sam Wheeler, Ian Kirkpatrick, Johnny Thompson, along with juniors Jackson Olson and Nick Lancaster, advanced to the state tournament.

Arriola carded a 78 and finished as a regional runner-up, as he was just two strokes behind regional champion Drayton Cleaver of Chanute.

As for Olson, the Louisburg junior set a personal record by six strokes to shoot an 81 and took fourth overall. Those personal bests were enough to get the Wildcats into that third place spot.

At state, Arriola and Wheeler finished as the team's top two golfers. Arriola carded a 97 to take 59th overall, while Wheeler finished with a 98 and came in 66th.



9. Brueggen's earns school's first state swim medal

LENEXA – Even though she is just a freshman, Sabra Brueggen is already putting a stamp on her high school swim career at Louisburg High School.

It all came to a rousing end on May 21 as Brueggen earned her first state medal at the Class 5-1A Kansas State Swim and

Diving Championships at the Shawnee Mission School District Aquatic Center.

Brueggen became the first swimmer in school history to earn a state medal as she finished fifth in the 100-yard backstroke in 1:00.58.

On the day before in the preliminaries, Brueggen also took fifth in a season-best time of 1:00.15.

“Medaling as freshman means the world to me, and it proves to me that all of my hard work for all of these years, has paid off,” Brueggen said. “I feel like I performed my absolute best at state, and I was very happy with the results. It gives me confidence that I will have a bright future representing OzPaLou at the state swim meets.”

She nearly had a second medal in the 50 freestyle. Brueggen put together a season-best time of 25.26 seconds, but finished ninth overall. It was the same finish she had the in the preliminaries.

The top eight in each event earn a state medal as she was just .06 away from earning another spot on the medal stand.



8. Harding takes over as Wildcat football coach

The Louisburg football program had a different leader on the sidelines this past season.

The USD 416 Board of Education approved the hire of LHS assistant coach Drew Harding to be the team's new head coach in January after the district decided not to renew the contract of former coach Robert Ebenstein.

Harding spent the last five seasons as a Wildcat assistant coach, including time as a defensive coordinator. He is a 2010 Louisburg graduate and was a big part of the Wildcat program during his time as a student-athlete at Louisburg High School.

However, Harding didn't see himself be a head coach of any sport coming out of college.

"It means a lot," Harding said. "When I got out of school, I didn't get into education right away and started somewhere else. I decided to get into education because of the impact my former coaches at Louisburg had on me. To come full circle and to be in the position that I am in now, is pretty surreal. I am really excited for the opportunity and hopefully I can have the same type of impact on student athletes as they come through the program."

Ebenstein has been the head coach the last five seasons and helped the Wildcats to a 30-18 record during that time, including a Frontier League and regional title in 2018. He had a winning record three of those five seasons.

He was also named the KFCA Coach of the Year during that season and was selected to be an assistant coach for the Kansas Shrine Bowl. He was an assistant coach for the Wildcat program for five years before earning the head coaching job.



7. Conley resigns a Louisburg head boys and girls soccer coach

Louisburg High School head boys and girls soccer coach Kyle Conley stepped down from his position after seven years.

He was recently hired to lead the boys and girls soccer programs at Blue Valley West, where he will serve as the head coach of both teams.

Conley, who also taught social studies at LHS, informed the players and parents of his decision on May 4. The Blue Valley Board of Education approved his hire on May 9.

“Making the decision to leave Louisburg was extremely difficult,” Conley said. “The players and parents, both past and present, made this decision tough. No parents or players caused this decision. I am very thankful to Mr. (Dave) Tappan and Mr. (Darin) Gagnebin for giving me this opportunity to coach and teach at Louisburg. The amount of support that my

teams, my family and I received from Louisburg soccer parents and the community was incredible.”

Bobby Bovaird was hired as the new boys head coach, while Ben York returned to the program as the new assistant. York was also named the girls head coach after serving 13 years as the boys head coach previous to Conley.

Conley has the been head girls coach at Louisburg since its inception in 2016 and has led that program to four consecutive state final fours.

Twice, the Wildcats made the state championship game and finished runner-up on both occasions. He has guided the program to an 82-34-3 record.

Conley took over the boys program in 2016 and finished with a 77-32-3 record. He led the Wildcats to two state final fours during that span, including a third place finish in 2020.

“I am so proud of the things that our student athletes in the soccer programs have accomplished both on and off the soccer field,” Conley said. “I will always cherish the memories that we have made here with the Louisburg soccer programs.”



6. Girls cross country qualifies for state, Vohs earns state medal

WAMEGO – For the second consecutive season, Emma Vohs left the Class 4A state cross country meet with more than was she arrived with.

Vohs earned her second state medal at Wamego Country Club as she finished 10th overall with a time of 20 minutes and 51 seconds. The Louisburg junior did what she set out to accomplish.

“I was so excited to win another state medal this season and couldn’t be happier that I reached my goal for that race, which was placing top 10,” Vohs said. “The race was a tougher course, as was the competition this year, but I am blessed to run with such talented girls that push me to do better each race.”

Vohs led the Lady Cat team that qualified for state for the sixth consecutive season. As a team, Louisburg finished eighth overall with 208 points.

A week earlier at regionals, the team of Vohs, Maddy Rhamy, Lola Edwards, Nova Ptacek, Bree Gassman, Erin Apple and Madison Huggins finished third to punch their ticket to state

“It never gets old seeing the joy in the team’s eyes when they hear they qualified for state,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “The girls work hard to accomplish this goal each year, and because of their dedication to their sport, they achieve great things even if they might not make it, but they did.

“The program has built itself and I’m just glad to be a part of it. Yes, we put together a training plan to accomplish great things at the end of the season, but the runners do the work to get there. It takes self discipline, motivation and

guts to be there at the end of the season.”



5. Wildcat wrestling medals 3 at state

Louisburg wrestling has had its fair share of state medalists in its long history, but what the Wildcats accomplished in February at the Tony’s Pizza Events Center in Salina was something the program had never seen before.

The Wildcats left the Class 4A state tournament with three state medalists, the most for one year in program history.

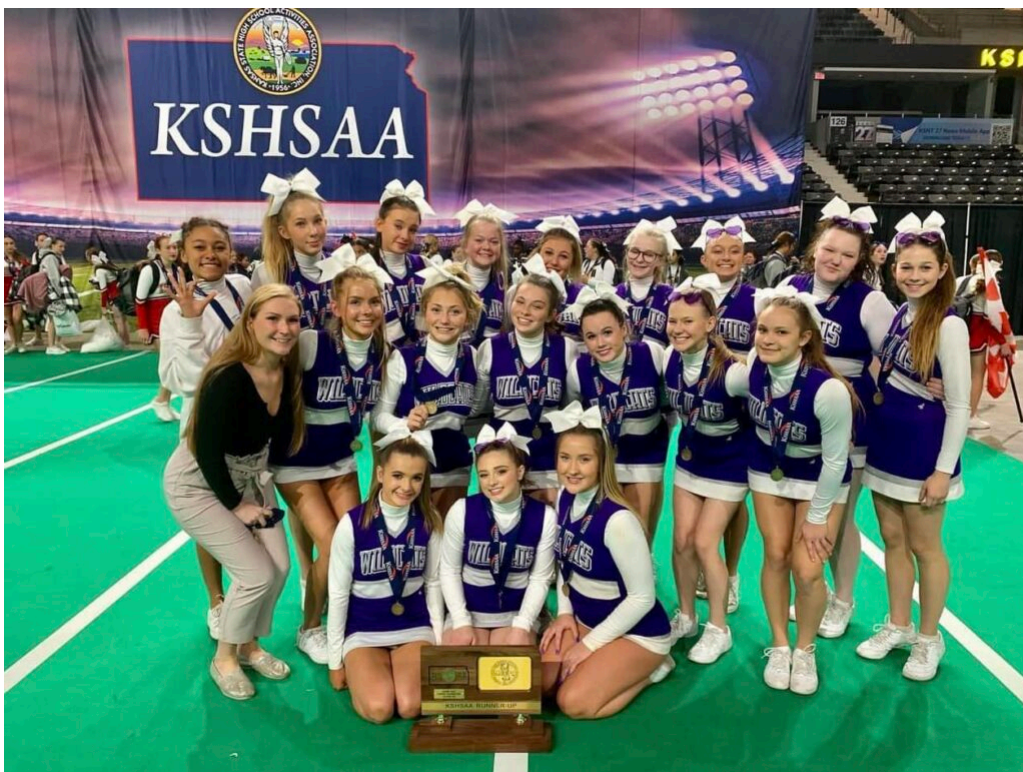
Aiden Barker (195 pounds), Kaven Bartlett (126) and Elijah Eslinger (285) each finished in the top six in their respective weight classes and put together their best performances of the season. It was also the first time each of them earned a state medal.

“This season was the most state placers we’ve had in a single year in program history,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Prior to 1992, KSHSAA only medaled the top 4 in each weight. In both 1988 and 1989, we had two top-4 placers and one top-6 placer, but this really shows how the program is progressing

and developing. We nearly had four medalists, too.”

Barker, a senior, was a favorite for a medal heading into Salina and finished fifth overall with a 13-1 major decision over Ottawa’s Jared Ferguson in the fifth-place match.

Bartlett and Eslinger also left lasting impressions on the Wildcat program as each medaled sixth overall after both nearly turned their brackets upside down as they advanced to the semifinals on Friday. They both guaranteed themselves a medal on the first day.



4. Louisburg cheer earns state runner-up performance

TOPEKA – It has almost become commonplace to see the Louisburg High School cheer squad in the finals of the Class 4A Gameday Spirit Showcase.

However, that doesn’t mean the cheerleaders are any less excited about it.

For the second straight season, the Wildcats finished as the state runner-up in the Class 4A competition at the Stormont-Vail Events Center. They finished with a score of 79.45 and were one point behind champion Paola.

It is the fourth straight season that the Wildcats have finished in the top three, which included a state championship in 2019.

"I am so unbelievably and incredibly proud of this team," Louisburg coach Marissa Morrow said. "This positivity and attitude that these girls have shown this year have been the key to our success. I had no doubt that the material and performances we brought on Saturday had the potential to do well, but it was the girls who made it possible to pull it together. They were all such competitors and left it all out on the mat, and I couldn't ask for more. We also could not have done it without the support of our amazing cheer families."

Members of the team are Sydney Dudzik, Bella Feikert, Zoe Cutshaw, Caroline Dugger, Elizabeth George, Addison Drake, Brooklyn Harmon, Adison Vargo, Maddy Carpenter-Ross, Sienna Finch, Alayna Stohs, Alaina Dudzik, Maddie O'Keefe, Liz Willming, Kayleigh Ramsey, Taryn Osborn, Anna Brizendine and Jocelyn Burk.



3. LHS football secures Frontier League title

With just over a minute left in regulation, Louisburg was staring at the possibility of their first league loss and was watching an outright Frontier League title slip away.

Spring Hill scored a touchdown and took a four-point lead with 1 minute and 12 seconds left. Things were looking bleak for the Wildcats.

As it turned out, 52 seconds was all the Wildcats needed to pull off one of the season's most memorable moments. Louisburg quarterback Declan Battle found junior Caden Caplinger in the endzone on an 18-yard touchdown pass with 20 seconds remaining to give the Wildcats a 20-17 victory.

The win was the Wildcats' seventh straight on the season and clinched the team's first Frontier League championship since 2018.

“There weren’t a lot of people who thought we could be league champions,” Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. “I don’t think it was anything that people expected out of us, and the Frontier League is really good. For this group to come to work, get better every day and to see success is pretty sweet.”

The win was extra special for 16 Louisburg seniors as they were also able to celebrate that league title on Senior Night.

Jackson Kush, Nathan Apple, Carson Wade, Isaiah Whitley, Riley Van Eaton, J.R. Rooney, Will Hutsell, Brayton Brueggen, Christian Golladay, Nathan Vincent, Jase Hovey, Mack Newell, Hunter Moore, Mason Dobbins, Corbin Hamman and Layne Ryals all got to end their final regular season home game with a win.

“The Frontier League title means so much to me and this team,” Rooney said. “As a team before the season, the seniors wrote down our goals, and league champs was on everyone’s list. To clinch it on senior night was amazing. Going undefeated at home, to win it on our field in front of our town – it was an indescribable feeling.”



2. Wildcat volleyball finishes fourth at state

HUTCHINSON – The state tournament ended the way it started for the Louisburg volleyball team – with a loss to Towanda-Circle.

Still, it was everything that happened in between that made for a lot of lasting memories for the Wildcat players.

Louisburg went 2-1 in pool play at the Hutchinson Sports Arena, which included a revenge win over Tonganoxie in the final match of the day. That gave the Lady Cats a spot in the state semifinals Saturday, where they finished fourth in Class 4A.

The Wildcats suffered a 2-0 loss to both Bishop Miege and Circle, but they still ended their season as one of the state's top teams.

"I am extremely proud of this team," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "Looking at how we started this season, and our ups and downs along the way, it is a huge accomplishment for them to have come together as a team at the end of the season and play our best volleyball yet. It was apparent in the last couple of weeks that they really started playing for each other and capitalizing on the strong team bonds they built throughout the year."

It was all thanks to an upset the previous week. Louisburg defeated the state's No. 1 seed, Baldwin, in the sub-state championship match to earn the state berth.

The Wildcats, the No. 9 seed, knocked off No. 1 seed Baldwin, 25-18 and 25-19, at Baldwin High School in the finals of the Class 4A sub-state tournament. That win puts Louisburg in the state tournament for the first time since 2019.

Members of the team are Emma Prettyman, Adyson Ross, Claire

Brown, Allie Kennedy, Ashlyn Berck, Delaney Nelson, Izzy Moreland, Bronwynn Williams, Caileigh Kilgore, Megan Quinn, Hailey Sword and Madelyn Williams.



1. Wildcat boys take third at state track; Koontz, Caplinger win state titles; Lady Cats medal nine

WICHITA – For the second consecutive season, the Louisburg boys track and field team brought home hardware from the Class 4A state meet.

After winning the state championship in 2021, the Wildcats once again found their way to the podium in Wichita as they finished third overall with 67 points.

Andale won the state championship with 101 points and Chanute was the state runner-up with 71.

Louisburg got points from a lot of different areas as the Wildcats medaled in 10 events and had 12 medalists overall, including all three of their relays.

Louisburg senior Tom Koontz won a pair of state titles in the hurdles, while sophomore Caden Caplinger captured the gold medal in the pole vault.



“I am not going to complain at all,” Koontz said. “I believe we came here with less people than we did last year and everyone did their best. Even though we didn’t get exactly what we wanted, third place is still a great achievement.”

What he couldn’t believe was he had just won his first state title in the 300 hurdles and Koontz did so by breaking a 14-year-old school record. Koontz ran a time of 38.98 seconds to break R.J. Saunders’ record of 39.16 set in 2008 to earn the gold.

It turned out to be his second state title of the day as he also earned the gold medal in the 110-meter high hurdles with a time of 14.61 seconds. Koontz won the state in that event last season as well.

Caplinger cleared a lot of his marks in the pole vault and did so in convincing fashion as he was able to win a state title in just his second year with the program.



Last season at state, Caplinger medaled eighth after he cleared 12-6. A year later, the Louisburg sophomore improved his mark by two feet and is a state champion.

It was an impressive showing from Caplinger as he didn't miss an attempt until he tried for 15 feet at the end. He entered the competition at 12-6 and had five straight successful clearances.

"At first I was really nervous, but then it just kind of turned into a routine thing," Caplinger said. "I started going over heights consistently and the rest just kind of fell into place. I cleared 14-6 earlier this week twice in a row, so I knew I could do it. I was still a little nervous though."

As for the Lady Cats, Delaney Wright left the state meet with three medals. Wright, who has been coming back from a severe injury for most of the season, finished as the state runner-up

in the 400-meter dash, third place in the 200 dash and fifth in the long jump.

A season ago, Wright was the state champion in all three events, but couldn't get the repeat she was hoping for.



"Going into state I knew I still wasn't where I want to be due to my injury a couple months ago," Wright said. "But I wanted to attack it still and give it all I had. I am blessed I was there to compete and earn three medals cause in the beginning I didn't even know if I was going to compete my senior year."

In all, the Lady Cats put together a strong state performance as they medaled in nine events and finished with 40 team points and took sixth overall. They were just eight points away from the third place spot, and a plaque.

"Once again the state qualifiers did an amazing job," Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. "They all performed well and most beyond expectations. To leave the meet finishing in sixth place was outstanding. We left with lots of medals and great memories."

Nine Wildcats earn all-state football honors



Louisburg's Jase Hovey, Ashton Moore and Nathan Vincent were selected first team all-state by at least one publication earlier this month.

Several publications spent the month of December releasing their respective all-state football teams and several Louisburg players made those lists.

Nine different Wildcats made at least one all-state team, while senior defensive back Jase Hovey was the lone Louisburg player to earn all-state honors from all four publications.

Hovey was selected the Kansas Football Coaches Association all-state first team after leading the Louisburg secondary with 58 tackles to go along with two interceptions, including one for a touchdown earlier in the year against Paola.

The Louisburg senior was an honorable mention selection in Sports in Kansas, the Wichita Eagle and KSHSAA Covered.

Senior Nathan Vincent earned two first team selections by both Sports in Kansas and the Wichita Eagle as an offensive lineman. Vincent also thrived as a defensive end as he finished the season with with 80 tackles, 8.5 tackles for a loss and 6.5 sacks.

Sophomore Ashton Moore also racked up several honors for the Wildcats. Moore was a first team selection by Sports In Kansas, along with KSHSAA Covered.

Moore was also an honorable mention selection by the Eagle and was also named to the All-Simone Team by 810 Varsity. He led Louisburg with 114 tackles on the season, including 12 stops for a loss and 59 solo tackles.



Junior Quarterback Declan Battle, senior running back Riley Van Eaton and senior lineman J.R. Rooney were honorable mention selections by Sports in Kansas, Wichita Eagle and KSHSAA Covered.

Senior kicker Layne Ryals was an honorable mention by Sports in Kansas and the Wichita Eagle, while Senior receiver Mason Dobbins, tight end Mack Newell were honorable mention selections by Sports in Kansas.

Offensively, Battle led the Wildcats as he finished the season with more than 1,700 yards of total offense. Battle threw for 1,027 yards and eight touchdowns and he also rushed for 709 yards and 10 touchdowns.

On the outside, Dobbins was one of Battle's favorite targets. Dobbins led the team with 25 catches, 382 yards and four touchdowns.

The Wildcats were also successful on the ground thanks to Van Eaton. He carried the ball 172 times for 1,043 yards and 15 touchdowns. He also had 188 yards receiving out of the backfield.

Rooney, along with his play on the offensive line, finished the year with 36 tackles, a sack and a forced fumble as a defensive tackle.

In his first year of varsity action, Newell was a big part of the Wildcat offense at tight end. Along with helping the offensive line, he also finished with nine catches for 93 yards.

As the team's kicker, Ryals converted 5 of 7 field goal tries this season, with his longest coming from 43 yards. He was also 38 of 39 on extra points.

ALL-STATE FOOTBALL

SPORTS IN KANSAS

First Team: Nathan Vincent, Offensive Line; Ashton Moore, Linebacker; Jase Hovey, Athlete

Honorable Mention: Riley Van Eaton, Running Back; Declan Battle, Quarterback; Mason Dobbins, Wide Receiver; Mack Newell, Tight End; J.R. Rooney, Lineman; Layne Ryals, Kicker/Defensive Back

KFBCA

First Team: Jase Hovey, Defensive Back

WICHITA EAGLE

First Team: Nathan Vincent, Offensive Line

Honorable Mention: Declan Battle, Quarterback; Riley Van Eaton, Running Back; J.R. Rooney, Defensive Line; Ashton

Moore, Linebacker; Jase Hovey, Defensive Back; Layne Ryals, Kicker

KSHSAA COVERED

First Team: Ashton Moore, Flex

Honorable Mention: J.R. Rooney, Lineman; Nathan Vincent; Lineman; Declan Battle, Quarterback; Jase Hovey, Defensive Back; Riley Van Eaton, Running Back;

ALL-SIMONE TEAM

Ashton Moore, Linebacker

Frontier champion Wildcats earn 18 spots on all-league team



The Louisburg football team earned 18 spots on the all-league team that was released last week. Overall, 13 Wildcats were named to the all-league team.

Going undefeated in the Frontier League and winning its first league title since 2018, the Louisburg football team caught the eyes of a lot of opposing coaches.

So when the all-league teams were released last week, it came

as no surprise that there were plenty of Wildcats to be found on it.

Louisburg earned 18 spots on the all-league list, that includes eight on the offensive side, seven on defense and three on special teams. In all, 13 Wildcats earned all-league honors as a few of them earned spots on both sides of the ball.

“I felt like we were represented well,” Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. “We said at the banquet that team success leads to individual recognition and I think that is shown by the amount of kids that were selected to all league teams. You don’t get to vote for your own athletes, but the league coaches must have noticed our players and the quality of athletes we were able to have on the field this year.”

On offense, four Wildcats were named to the first team in junior quarterback Declan Battle, senior running back Riley Van Eaton, senior receiver Mason Dobbins and senior lineman Nathan Vincent. Senior J.R. Rooney was named to the second team offensive line.

Seniors Will Hutsell (lineman), Mack Newell (tight end) and junior Caden Caplinger (multi-purpose) were named as honorable mentions.



Louisburg also earned four spots on the all-league first team defense. Sophomore Ashton Moore was selected as linebacker, while Rooney was named to the first team for his play at defensive tackle.

Senior Jase Hovey was named as a first team defensive back, while Layne Ryals was a first team multi-purpose player.

Junior Wyatt Holland was a second team linebacker and Vincent earned second team honors at defensive end. Hutsell was an honorable mention selection at defensive tackle.

In the specialist category, Ryals was selected as a second team kicker and honorable mention punter. Junior Hunter Heinrich was also named as an honorable mention returner.



Offensively, Battle led the Wildcats as he finished the season with more than 1,700 yards of total offense. Battle threw for 1,027 yards and eight touchdowns and he also rushed for 709 yards and 10 touchdowns.

“Declan was huge for us all year,” Harding said. “He was an effective passer for us and when he carried the ball he was a big play threat. He was able to run our offense really well and we are excited to see him take another step next year.”



On the outside, Dobbins was one of Battle's favorite targets. Dobbins led the team with 25 catches, 382 yards and four touchdowns.

"Mason was a big play threat for us at all times," Harding said. "You don't get a lot of athletes with his combination of height and speed. Mason generally had a corner playing off of him and a safety over the top to prevent the big play and for him to still be able to make some of those big plays is a testament to his skill set and his athletic ability."



The Wildcats were also successful on the ground thanks to Van Eaton. He carried the ball 172 times for 1,043 yards and 15 touchdowns. He also had 188 yards receiving out of the backfield.

“Riley was tough to tackle all year,” Harding said. “He made a lot of extra yards by his ability to slip through tacklers. I am proud of Riley for picking up the offense and executing it well. He was also a threat for us to catch passes out of the backfield.”



Vincent also provided the Wildcats with strong play on both sides of the ball as he led the Louisburg offensive line at his left tackle spot. He was a force on defense with 80 tackles, 8.5 tackles for a loss and 6.5 sacks.

“Nathan had a very good year for us at the left tackle spot,” Harding said. “Nathan always played with an edge and was able to execute a variety of blocks for us very well. Our offensive line as a whole played well all year and allowed us to average over 33 points per game.

“On the defensive side Nathan made a ton of plays for us. He was very good against both the run and pass. Nathan switched positions for us from linebacker to defensive end and really excelled at his new spot.”



Rooney also earned honors on both sides of the ball as he was a first-team selection at his defensive tackle spot and second team on the offensive line. He finished the season with 36 tackles, a sack and a forced fumble.

“JR had a very good year at his right guard spot,” Harding said. “JR was asked a lot of times to pull and kick and he was very effective at that. He had the quickness to get to second level and make blocks for us to spring big plays.

“He was also rock solid on the defensive side as well. As a DT, he was able to take on blocks and demand double teams. This allowed our linebackers to run free and were our leading tacklers on the team.”



Hutsell was also another Wildcat lineman to earn all-league

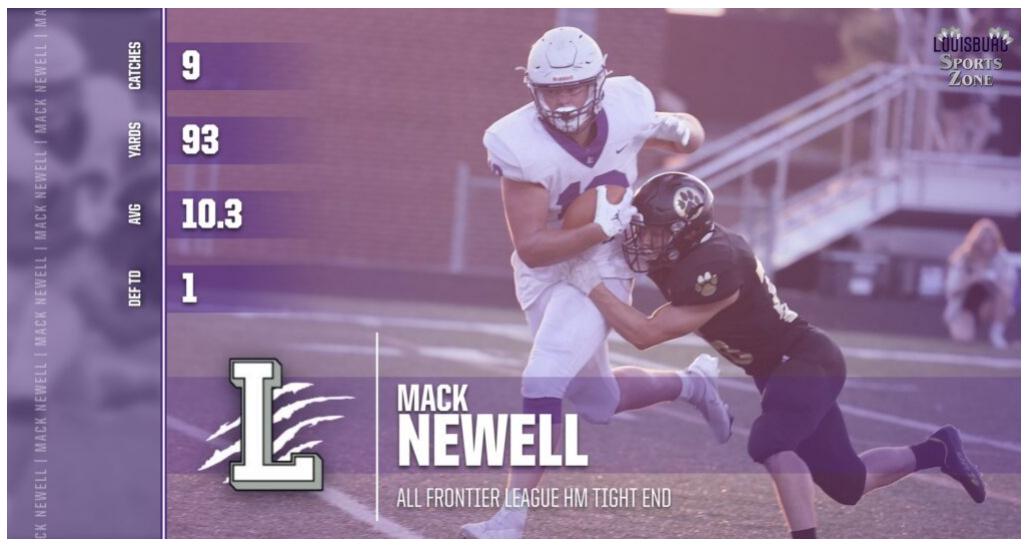
honors on both sides of the ball at right tackle and defensive tackle. Hutsell had 39 tackles on the year and 3.5 tackles for loss.

“Will was just solid for us all year long,” Harding said. “On both sides of the line we knew exactly what we were going to get from Will and that was consistency. Will is a kid who worked his butt off at all times and turned himself into a really good player.”



Also on offense, Caplinger turned in some big catches throughout the season and earned honorable mention honors at the multi-purpose spot. He finished with 12 catches for 146 yards and two touchdowns.

"Caden came on late in the year," Harding said. "I felt like his two best games were against Spring Hill and Bonner in the playoffs on the offensive side of the ball. Caden obviously made huge plays for us against Spring Hill in the 2 minute drill for the win. We are excited to have Caden back next year and hopefully see more of those plays."



In his first year of varsity action, Newell was a big part of the Wildcat offense at tight end. Along with helping the offensive line, he also finished with nine catches for 93 yards.

“Mack was a good blocker for us,” Harding said. “He was able to downblock well as well as loop inside and lead up on linebackers. Mack was also a big body for us in the passing game. For him to make an all league team with this being his first time playing football since his freshman year was pretty cool to see.”



The Wildcats also thrived on defense as it was led by Moore at the linebacker spot. Moore, a sophomore, led Louisburg with 114 tackles on the season, including 12 stops for a loss.

“Ashton was able to make a lot of plays from his linebacker spot this year for us,” Harding said. “He was our leading tackler and made several plays behind the line of scrimmage including forcing a safety against Rogers-Heritage. Ashton has good speed and can make plays running sideline to sideline. We are excited to have Ashton continue to make those plays over the next two years.”



Hovey was also a defensive presence for Louisburg at his safety spot. The Wildcat senior finished with 58 tackles to go along with two interceptions, including one for a touchdown earlier in the year against Paola.

“Jase battled through a hamstring injury the entire year,” Harding said. “He wasn’t able to reach his top speed, but he still made a ton of plays for us. He was the eraser of our defense. Anytime a play was about to break free it seemed like Jase was there to make the tackle. When he did make tackles running the alley most times he packed a punch as well.”



Ryals was selected to three different positions on the all-league team, including a first team spot as a defensive multi-purpose player. He finished the season 46 tackles, including five for a loss.

The Louisburg senior was also named as the all-league second team kicker, and honorable mention punter. Ryals converted 5 of 7 field goal tries this season, with his longest coming from 43 yards. He was also 38 of 39 on extra points.

“Layne had an excellent all around year,” Harding said. “On the defensive side of the ball Layne was our brains out there. He did a terrific job communicating and getting everyone lined up where they should be. Layne could do a variety of things for us from lining up on the line of scrimmage to being out wide in coverage.

“He was also very good at pinning teams inside the 20 with punts this year and several times inside the 5. His punts lead to a safety against Rogers-Heritage and a blocked punt for a touchdown against Baldwin. As far as kicking, Layne was a huge weapon for us. Most times teams were starting inside the 20 or at the 20 at best with his ability to kick touchbacks. He also was a weapon on extra points and field goals. Without his field goals we do not win the game against Spring Hill.”



Holland teamed up with Moore to provide strong linebacker play for Louisburg and finished second on the team in tackles. Holland ended the year with 89 tackles, including seven for a loss, two forced fumbles and one sack.

“Wyatt transitioned to playing linebacker for the first time this year and did really well,” Harding said. “Wyatt, just like Ashton, has a lot of speed and can make plays sideline to sideline. He was our second leading tackler and always plays with great energy and effort. We are excited to see Wyatt take another step next year.”



Heinrich provided the Wildcats with a strong return game on special teams as he was selected as an honorable mention.

“Hunter had several returns into plus territory for us this

year,” Harding said. “Our kickoff return team was a good special team unit for us and Hunter was a big part of that. The biggest kickoff return for Hunter was against Bonner Springs in the playoffs. We preached all week about starting fast. Hunter took the opening kickoff and returned it into plus territory setting up our offense and we rolled from there.”

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL

Offense

First Team

Quarterback: Declan Battle, Louisburg, junior

Running Back: Octavius Lyles, Eudora, senior; Colton Brusven, Tonganoxie, junior; Riley Van Eaton, Louisburg, senior

Wide Receiver: Isaiah Holthaus, Tonganoxie, junior; Mason Dobbins, Louisburg, senior; Adrion Seals, Eudora, junior

Tight End: Jaden Hamm, Eudora, senior

Offensive Line: Carter Meek, Spring Hill, junior; Nathan Vincent, Louisburg, senior; Eythen Moore, Eudora, senior; Kale Murdock, Paola, senior; Connor Cole, Tonganoxie, senior

Multi-Purpose: Ja’Veon Shepherd, Ottawa, senior; Landon Taylor, Paola, senior

Second Team

Quarterback: Kole Manley, Eudora, junior

Running Back: Colton McKanna, Spring Hill, junior; Landon Taylor, Paola; Zion Woodin, Ottawa, senior

Wide Receiver: Sam Darnell, Baldwin, senior; Jace Kerley, Paola, sophomore; Hayden Currie, Ottawa, senior

Tight end: Cooper D'Albini, Spring Hill, junior

Offensive Line: Austyn McFadden, Ottawa, senior; Jake Van Horn, Baldwin, sophomore; J.R. Rooney, Louisburg, senior; Micah Barron, Eudora, senior; Charlie Nolting, Bonner Springs, senior

Multi-Purpose: Jackson Torrez, Spring Hill, sophomore

Honorable Mention

Quarterback: Jack Harvey, Baldwin, junior; Talon Langford, Tonganoxie, sophomore; Jett Osbern, Paola, senior

Running Back: Peyton Parks, Bonner Springs, senior; Charlie Zeller, Paola, senior; Errol Siemon, Eudora, sophomore; Cody Buck, Baldwin, junior; Draven Pipkin, Spring Hill, senior

Wide Receiver: Nate Sims, Ottawa, freshman; Ryker Grossner, Baldwin, junior; Todd Brown, Tonganoxie, sophomore; Karen Streit, Bonner Springs, junior

Tight End: Mack Newell, Louisburg, senior; Junior Jara, Spring Hill, senior

Offensive Line: Derek Gomez, Ottawa, senior; Cole Rodden, Spring Hill, junior; Will Hutsell, Louisburg, senior; Thomas Cromer, Eudora, junior; Eli Richmond, Paola, junior; TJ Leeper, Tonganoxie, sophomore; Brett Davidson, Baldwin, sophomore; Carter Blann, Spring Hill, senior

Multi-Purpose: Caden Caplinger, Louisburg, junior

DEFENSE

First Team

END: Jaden Hamm, Eudora, senior; Mark Debiak, Spring Hill, junior

TACKLE: Kale Murdock, Paola, senior; JR Rooney, Louisburg,

senior; Thomas Davis, Spring Hill, senior

Linebacker: Braylen Hoobler, Eudora, junior; Brandon Richardson, Spring Hill, senior; Jack Messersmith, Tonganoxie, senior; Ashton Moore, Louisburg, sophomore

Backs: Kale Hammerschmidt, Eudora, senior; Adrion Seals, Eudora, junior; Wyatt Harris, Tonganoxie, senior; Jase Hovey, Louisburg, senior

Multi-Purpose: Layne Ryals, Louisburg, senior

Second Team

End: Nathan Vincent, Louisburg, senior; Jaiden Bender, Eudora, senior

Tackle: Kevin Whitten, Eudora, senior; Austyn McFadden, Ottawa, senior; Connor Cole, Tonganoxie, senior; Jay Flores, Bonner Springs, senior

Linebacker: Errol Siemon, Eudora, sophomore; Noah Anderson, Spring Hill, junior; Brody Stewart, Paola, senior; Wyatt Holland, Louisburg, junior

Backs: Nate Sims, Ottawa, freshman; Jack Harvey, Baldwin, junior; Landon Taylor, Paola, senior; Talon Langford, Tonganoxie, sophomore

Multi-Purpose: Matt Magette, Eudora, junior

Honorable Mention

End: Jake Van Horn, Baldwin, sophomore; Eli Richmond, Paola, junior; Nathen Smith, Tonganoxie, senior; Brett Davidson, Baldwin, sophomore; Keanu Tiafau, Spring Hill, junior; Tommy Evans, Ottawa, junior

Tackle: Will Hutsell, Louisburg, senior; Trenton Leeper, Tonganoxie, sophomore; Wade Enman, Paola, junior

Linebacker: Dylan Waggerman, Paola, senior; Matt Magette,

Eudora, junior; Parker Huge, Ottawa, junior; Keegan Rimmer, Ottawa, junior; Wesley Martin, Baldwin, senior; Peyton Parks, Bonner Springs, senior

Backs: Hayden Currie, Ottawa, senior; Hagan Whitcraft, Spring Hill, junior; Charlie Zeller, Paola, senior; Desmon Williams, Bonner Springs, sophomore

Multi-Purpose: James Newton, Spring Hill, senior; Braeden McGrath, Bonner Springs, senior

Specialists

First Team

Kicker: Jackson McWilliams, Tonganoxie, junior

Punter: Talon Langford, Tonganoxie, sophomore

Returner: Colton McKanna, Spring Hill, junior

Second Team

Kicker: Layne Ryals, Louisburg, senior

Punter: Zion Woodin, Ottawa, senior

Returner: Ja'Veon Shepherd, Ottawa, senior

Honorable Mention

Kicker: Zion Woodin, Ottawa, senior; Ryan Jackson, Spring Hill, sophomore

Punter: Layne Ryals, Louisburg, senior

Returner: Nate Sims, Ottawa, freshman; Hayden Currie, Ottawa, senior; Hunter Heinrich, Louisburg, junior

Week 10 Athlete of the Week: Riley Van Eaton



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

RILEY VAN EATON, SENIOR, FOOTBALL

Louisburg senior Riley Van Eaton was a big part of the offense for the Wildcat football team all season. On Thursday in the Wildcats' loss to St. Thomas Aquinas in the regional playoffs, Van Eaton tallied 139 yards of total offense and nearly 100 of those came on the ground.

The senior running back led the Wildcats in rushing on the season as he finished with 1,043 yards on the ground and another 188 yards receiving. He also tallied 15 touchdowns in 10 games.

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.

Previous winners:

Week 1: Layne Ryals

Week 2: Nathan Vincent

Week 3: Emma Vohs

Week 4: Claire Brown

Week 5: Ashton Moore

Week 6: Colin McManigal

Week 7: Allie Kennedy

Week 8: Declan Battle

Week 9: Cade Gassman



Wildcats' season comes to a close with loss to Aquinas



Louisburg seniors Jase Hovey (left) and Layne Ryals team up to bring down a St. Thomas Aquinas player Thursday during the Class 4A regional playoffs at Wildcat Stadium.

All seasons come to an end at one point or another, but for the Louisburg football team, the Wildcats weren't ready to be done.

That made it all the more difficult as they suffered a 40-0

loss to St. Thomas Aquinas on Thursday in the regional round of the Class 4A playoffs. The Wildcats watched as Aquinas celebrated on their own field – a celebration they were hoping to do themselves.

The Wildcats did their best to keep the Saints down, but just couldn't keep up with Aquinas – who moved down from Class 5A a year ago.

Still, Louisburg put together a season to remember as it reeled off eight wins in a row and earned its first Frontier League championship since 2018.

“It is a tough one, obviously, but I think in the next few days that people are going to be proud of the season we put together,” Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. “To be league champions, when nobody picked us or expected us to do it, I think the kids put together a phenomenal season and it is something to be proud of.”

Kansas Class 4A football has emerged as one of the toughest classification to win a state championship.

A class that already features perennial power Bishop Miege and St. James Academy (who won the state title the last two years), added another this season with the inclusion of St. Thomas Aquinas.

All three play in the challenging Eastern Kansas League against all the Blue Valley programs – which mainly consist of Class 6A schools.

Each of the private schools were in Louisburg's part of the bracket and the Wildcats were going to have a difficult road. Unfortunately for Louisburg, the Wildcats could not get past Aquinas – the best team Louisburg has seen this season.



Louisburg head coach Drew Harding talks to his team following the Wildcats' loss Thursday to Aquinas.

"They are a really good team," Harding said. "They have a physical line up front and have some big backs that can run downhill well. They have an effective passing game too.

"They are a really good offensive team, but they are really good defensively as well. Their front is great, linebackers are fast and physical and they have the best group of defensive backs that we have seen all year. All across the board, they are a good team and well coached."

It wasn't a high-scoring game in the first half as the Wildcat defense did their best to slow the Saints down. After Aquinas scored on their opening drive, the Wildcats had a chance to answer.

Louisburg put together a drive that lasted more than six minutes that included by runs by Riley Van Eaton and quarterback Declan Battle that took the ball to midfield.

Battle then tried to hit Mason Dobbins down the sideline for a pass, but Aquinas was called for pass interference to put the ball in Saints territory. Van Eaton then picked up a first

down for Louisburg on a 14-yard run.

Aquinas sacked Battle on a third down at the 30, which set up a Layne Ryals field goal attempt. The 47-yard kick was blocked, but the Wildcats ran more than six minutes off the clock.



Louisburg senior Will Hutsell (61) and sophomore Ashton Moore bring down an Aquinas runner Thursday.

Louisburg's defense came up big and forced a 3-and-out thanks to tackles for a loss by Wyatt Holland and Jase Hovey. The Saints did the same to the Wildcat offense and got the ball back early in the second.

Nathan Vincent and Ashton Moore forced the Saints offense into a 3rd and 14 thanks to tackles for a loss, but quarterback Aiden Skinner completed a 25-yard pass to keep the drive alive. Three plays later, the Saints scored on a 20-yard run.

St. Thomas Aquinas would take advantage of short Wildcat punt on their next possession and Sean Carroll scored on a 2-yard run to go up 21-0 at halftime.

"I really think we had chances to put some points on the board, but when you make mistakes that is going to change the game and change the momentum," Harding said. "We just couldn't make those plays, and when you play a really good team, the mistakes you make get magnified and that is what happened."

Aquinas tacked on three more touchdowns in the second half and the Wildcats didn't get many looks at the end zone in the final two quarters.

Their best look came toward the end of the first half as Battle connected with Hovey and Van Eaton on pass plays. The Wildcats eventually got down to the Saints' 11-yard line, but their drive stalled there.



Louisburg senior Riley Van Eaton avoids an Aquinas defender to gain some extra yards Thursday.

Van Eaton led the Wildcat rushing attack with 97 yards on the ground and also had 42 yards receiving. Battle threw for 87 yards on the night and also had 31 yards on the ground.

Defensively, the Wildcats made some big plays throughout the

night. Hovey led the Wildcats with 13 tackles and Moore finished with 10. Louisburg also combined to record seven tackles for a loss.

The loss also marks the end for 16 Louisburg seniors. Mason Dobbins, Corbin Hamman, Isaiah Whitley, Mack Newell, Jackson Kush. Carson Wade, Jase Hovey, Riley Van Eaton, Nathan Apple, Layne Ryals, Nathan Vincent, Hunter Moore, Will Hutsell, Jackson Rooney, Christian Golladay and Brayton Brueggen all played their final game as a Wildcat.

“We have 16 seniors and top to bottom they all contributed within their respective roles,” Harding said. “It is tough because they have put a lot into the program. While their playing days of Louisburg football might have ended, they will always be Louisburg football players and a part of this program.”

SCORING SUMMARY

LOU 0 0 0 0 – 0

STA 7 14 6 13 – 40

First Quarter

S: Gianni Rizzi 32 run (Matt Seibolt kick)

Second Quarter

S: Sean Carroll 20 run (Seibolt kick)

S: Carroll 2 run (Seibolt kick)

Third Quarter

S: Jeremiah Penney 20 pass from Aiden Skinner (kick failed)

Fourth Quarter

S: Carroll 17 run (kick failed)

S: Brogan Jaworski 35 run (Seibolt kick)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Riley Van Eaton 22-97; Declan Battle 11-31; Jase Hovey 1-7; Ashton Moore 1-0

PASSING – Declan Battle 8-20-87

RECEIVING – Riley Van Easton 3-42; Mason Dobbins 3-31; Jase Hovey 1-10; Mack Newell 1-4

TACKLES – Jase Hovey 13, Ashton Moore 10, Wyatt Holland 8, Layne Ryals 7, Will Hutsell 5, Caden Caplinger 4, Nathan Vincent 4, Declan Battle 2, Isaiah Whitley 2, J.R. Rooney 2, Mason Dobbins 1, Mack Newell 1, Brady Hickey 1, Carson Wade 1

Wildcats open state playoffs with shutout of Bonner Springs



Louisburg senior Nathan Apple (left) celebrates his first varsity touchdown with teammate Layne Ryals late in Friday's shutout of Bonner Springs.

The last time Louisburg and Bonner Springs squared off in

September, the Wildcats found themselves down by a point at halftime before reeling off more than 40 points in the second half to get the win.

This time around, Louisburg left no doubt who was going to win the game.

Louisburg scored seven touchdowns and held Bonner Springs scoreless in a 48-0 win Friday in the first round of the Class 4A state playoffs at Wildcat Stadium.

"We talked all week that it was a 7-6 game at halftime last time we played them and they were ahead," Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. "We had to start out fast and play like the second half of the first meeting we had. Right off the bat we started with a good kick return to give us good field position and we never looked back from there."

Everyone contributed for the Wildcats (8-1) as they reeled off their eighth consecutive victory. Six different players scored touchdowns and quarterback Declan Battle distributed the ball well.

Battle had three touchdown passes on the night and all three to different receivers. The Louisburg junior finished with 132 yards through the air as the Wildcats jumped out to a 35-0 lead at halftime.



Louisburg senior Riley Van Eaton sheds a Bonner Springs defender Friday at Wildcat Stadium. Van Eaton rushed for more than 100 yards and two touchdowns.

"This is the first game where I think we really spread the ball around," Harding said. "We had catches by five or six different receivers and our backs were getting good carries."

On the game's opening kickoff, the Wildcats put themselves in good position. Junior Hunter Heinrich returned the kick 59 yards, and the Wildcats found the end zone on a 4-yard run by senior Riley Van Eaton.

It was the first of two touchdowns for Van Eaton, who finished the game with 116 yards on the ground on just 17 carries.

After the Wildcats forced a Bonner three-and-out, a shanked Braves punt gave Louisburg the ball on the Bonner Springs 34-yard line. A 24-yard pass to Mack Newell from Battle set the Wildcats up inside the 5, and there Battle his senior Corbin Hamman for a 3-yard touchdown pass.

On the Wildcats' next possession, Battle found junior Caden

Caplinger on a 22-yard touchdown pass as Louisburg took a three score lead into the second quarter.



Louisburg senior Mason Dobbins hauls in a long touchdown pass in the second quarter of Friday's playoff game against Bonner Springs.

Louisburg's passing game continued to thrive as Battle hit senior Mason Dobbins for 57-yard touchdown pass, then sophomore Ashton Moore had a 14-yard touchdown run before halftime to give the Wildcats a 35-0 lead.

Van Eaton scored a touchdown on a 2-yard run in the third quarter, and then with a running clock, the Wildcat reserves had a chance to score in the fourth.

It turned out to be a special moment, as with under a minute left in the game, backup quarterback Alex Saad hit senior Nathan Apple for a 24-yard score as it was Apple's first varsity touchdown.

"That was the highlight of the night for me," Harding said. "There are not enough good things you can say about Nathan

Apple and the kind of kid that he is. He works so hard every single day. He was supposed to go to Scholar's Bowl on Thursday, but he stayed back so he could stay on special teams and be with his teammates. For him to get a touchdown was awesome."

Defensively, the Wildcats shined as well. Louisburg held Bonner Springs to just 133 yards of total offense and forced a turnover.

Moore led the Wildcats with nine tackles on the night, while senior Nathan Vincent finished with seven, including three tackles for a loss and a sack.



Louisburg senior Isaiah Whitley chases down the Bonner Springs quarterback Friday in the team's 48-0 win.

Senior Isaiah Whitley also recorded a sack, while Heinrich led the team with three pass deflections. J.R. Rooney, Caplinger and Whitley each had a forced fumble, while Will Hutsell had a fumble recovery.

"Defensively, different people were making plays and we got a

shutout, so that is always good,” Harding said. “It was a lot of fun to see their success.”

Christian Golladay, Hutsell, Rooney, Jaymes Melton, Vincent and Brayton Brueggen all played on the offensive line and controlled the line of scrimmage. Defensively, Rooney, Hutsell, Newell, Whitley and Vincent did the same.

“The big boys up front played well,” Hardin said. “We had a couple new guys step and start as we had some guys gone for FFA and missed practice. They new guys like Christian Golladay were able to get in there and then the starters were able to get back in after a bit. We had some good depth and they all played well.”

The Wildcats have a big test ahead of them in the regional round of the playoffs as they will host St. Thomas Aquinas. The game has been moved up to Thursday from Friday due to inclement weather in the forecast. Kickoff is still set for 7 p.m.

Harding knows it will be a challenge for his group as Aquinas is ranked No. 1 in Class 4A by the Kansas Football Coaches Association, but his players are prepared and excited to get back on the field.

“They are a good team,” Harding said of Aquinas. “I think they are ranked No. 1 in the state, but if we have learned anything about the kids that we have is that they battle no matter the circumstances. We will have a game plan ready, get prepared and come out and compete.”

SCORING SUMMARY

LOU 21 14 7 6 – 48

BON 0 0 0 0 – 0

First quarter

L: Riley Van Eaton 4 run (Layne Ryals kick)

L: Corbin Hamman 3 pass from Declan Battle (Ryals kick)

L: Caden Caplinger 22 pass from Battle (Ryals kick)

Second quarter

L: Mason Dobbins 57 pass from Battle (Ryals kick)

L: Ashton Moore 14 run (Ryals kick)

Third quarter

L: Van Eaton 2 run (Ryals kick)

Fourth quarter

L: Nathan Apple 24 pass from Alex Saad (run failed)

STATISTICS

RUSHING – Riley Van Eaton 17-116; Declan Battle 5-43; Ashton Moore 3-24; Wyatt Holland 2-23; Logan Henry 3-13; Russell Wiseman 2-10

PASSING – Declan Battle 7-9-132; Alex Saad 3-4-43

RECEIVING – Mason Dobbins 2-67; Mack Newell 1-24; Nathan Apple 1-24; Caden Caplinger 1-22; Myles Vohs 2-19; Riley Van Eaton 2-16; Corbin Hamman 1-3

TACKLES – Ashton Moore 9, Nathan Vincent 7, Wyatt Holland 6, Caden Caplinger 4, Isaiah Whitley 3, Will Hutsell 3, J.R. Rooney 3, Mason Dobbins 2, Corbin Hamman 2, Mack Newell 2, Jackson Kush 2, Layne Ryals 2, Brayden Yoder 2, Declan Battle 1, Reid McCaskill 1, Brady Hickey 1, Carson Wade 1, Brayton Brueggen 1

Week 8 Athlete of the Week: Declan Battle



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

DECLAN BATTLE, JUNIOR, FOOTBALL

Louisburg junior quarterback Declan Battle helped the Wildcat football team to a big victory in their final regular season game of the year. Battle drove the Wildcats 80 yards, and completed an 18-yard touchdown pass to Caden Caplinger in under a minute to give Louisburg a 20-17 come-from-behind win over Spring Hill. The victory gave the Wildcats their first Frontier League championship since 2018.

Battle had a pair of big touchdowns in the game. He scored the team's first touchdown in the third quarter on a 27-yard run that tied the game at 10-all and then followed with the game-winning pass late in the fourth. In all, Battle finished with 205 total yards on the night and guided the Wildcats to their seventh straight victory.

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.

Previous winners:

Week 1: Layne Ryals

Week 2: Nathan Vincent

Week 3: Emma Vohs

Week 4: Claire Brown

Week 5: Ashton Moore

Week 6: Colin McManigal

Week 7: Allie Kennedy

