

Wildcats bounce back with road victory over Lansing



Louisburg defender Sammy McDaniel clears a ball out of the back during a match earlier this season. The Wildcats went on the road and came away with a 3-0 win Friday at Lansing.

Sometimes the best thing to happen after a loss is the opportunity to get right back on the field, and Friday it certainly helped the Louisburg girls soccer team.

Following a 2-0 loss to Eudora on Thursday, the Wildcats traveled to Lansing the very next day in hopes of putting that loss behind them. It did the trick as Louisburg blanked the Lions in a 3-0 victory and the Wildcats are now 8-4 on the season.

“Playing back-to-back is difficult, and having limited players, we had a big challenge head of us,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We came out and dominated the game, and had a lot of shots. We pressed a little bit and were trying to do too much. We finally settled down and played our game.

“We played well, but just could not find the back of the net. We had a ridiculous amount of opportunities, but they packed it in and made it difficult to get any shots through to the goal. Credit to them, but they had a lot of blocked shots. We grinded it out and then we really played well. I liked how our girls found a way and played so hard.”

Goals were hard to come by early on in the contest as the

match was scoreless at halftime, despite the Wildcats having opportunities on goal.

It all changed in the second half.

Freshman Hailey Sword got the ball just inside the box and sent a shot past the Lansing goalie for the team's first score about 15 minutes into the second half.

Several minutes later, Louisburg struck again. Senior Emma Christy took the ball down the left side and put a shot on goal. The shot was knocked away, but freshman Lola Edwards was there to get the rebound and tap it in for the goal.

Sophomore Tehya Harvey found herself in a scrum in front of the goal just moments later and sealed the win with a score of her own to put the Wildcats up three.

The Louisburg defense didn't allow a shot on goal for the entire game, while junior goalie Sierra Hahn earned the clean sheet for the Wildcats

The schedule doesn't let up any for Louisburg as it will play its fourth game in seven days today when the Wildcats travel to Basehor-Linwood. Game time is set for 6 p.m.

Wildcats fall to Eudora on road

After defeating Eudora earlier in the season, the Cardinals got their payback on Louisburg as they handed the Wildcats a 2-0 setback Thursday in Eudora.

Louisburg had some opportunities, but Cardinals took advantage of theirs as they converted a penalty kick and scored another in the second half to pull away.

"Eudora came out and played with a massive amount of energy," Conley said. "The game was pretty back and forth, but we struggled to finish our chances. They had limited chances, but capitalized on them. We struggled to find the back of the net.

We played hard and had a decent amount of possession but could not get the ball to the back of the net.

“A debatable penalty kick was called and that gave them the lead. Then in the second half their player hit a fantastic shot for them to go up two. I thought we played as well as they did and that the game was not a 2-0 difference. It was a tough game but there were lots of opportunities for us to learn from and to get better.”

Junior Reese Johnson had two shots on goal for the Wildcats, while freshmen Lexi Hampton and Lola Edwards also had good looks at the goal.

Wildcats roll Ottawa on Senior Night to stop losing streak



Louisburg seniors (from left) manager Weston Frank, Madi Quinn, Olivia Barber, Emma Christy, Kennady Wilkerson, Liz Guzman, Missy Meigs and manager Reece Jones were honored on Senior Night prior to their 6-0 win over Ottawa on Tuesday.

The Louisburg girls soccer team was in the midst of its first losing streak of the season and the Wildcats needed it to end before it got any further.

As it turned out, Senior Night was the perfect remedy.

Louisburg honored its six senior players and two managers prior to Tuesday's home contest against Ottawa, and what was an already a special night, turned out even better when the game was over.

The Wildcats (7-3) scored six goals, four in the second half, as they rolled to a 6-0 shutout of the Cyclones and ended its two game skid.

"It is good to get back to the things that we like to do and get back to the way we like to play," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "The kids played hard and they are playing the right way. They are still young and they are learning.

"Our seniors are trying to lead, and they are doing a good job, but there are so many kids in different spots or new spots. We are piecing it together, but it was good to get everyone back on the same page. It is crazy how a win seems to fix everything. It is good to see the girls giggling and laughing again. That stuff just helps us confidence wise."



Senior Madi Quinn clears a ball out of the back Tuesday against Ottawa.

Prior to the match, seniors Madi Quinn, Olivia Barber, Emma Christy, Kennady Wilkerson, Liz Guzman and Missy Meigs were honored with their parents, as were managers Weston Frank and Reece Jones.

It is a group of kids that Conley has enjoyed and was glad they were able to end their Senior Night with a victory.

"It is a great group of girls," Conley said. "All six of them play their butts off every night and they all do anything that we ask. They never complain. They all pack their lunch, work their tails off and play so hard. They are everything that this program stands for and are always there for each other. That is the best part and you can't ask for any more from a kid."

“Individual achievements are great, but them being there for each other is the best part. Watching them be leaders and always encouraging their teammates, is so much fun to watch. That is the best you can ask for a senior class to be.”

It was a pair of freshman that led the Wildcat attack and got the team started offensively.

Freshmen Lexi Hampton finished the day with a team-high two goals, while freshman Lola Edwards had a a goal, including four shots on goal.

Senior Olivia Barber converted a penalty kick to help put Louisburg up 2-0 at halftime and she also had a team-high two assists.



Junior Reese Johnson watches as her sliding shot rolls past the Ottawa keeper for a goal Tuesday.

Hampton and Edwards opened the scoring for Louisburg in the second half. Then junior Reese Johnson had a sliding shot that rolled past the Ottawa keeper for a 5-0 lead.

Sophomore Bree Gassman had a shot that ricocheted off an Ottawa player late in the match for an own goal to compete the scoring. Gassman and Edwards also had assists on the day.

Johnson and Hampton each had five shots on goal to lead the Wildcats and Barber had two. Adyson Ross and Hailey Sword also had shots on target.

"Ottawa played a flat back and we tried to do some give and go's and break it down a little bit," Conley said. "It would open a huge gap when they stepped so we tried to exploit that and Reese did a really good job of that. Lex and Lola and just killed them up top. We just wanted to keep attacking and it worked out."



Senior Kennady Wilkerson heads the ball away Tuesday against the Cyclones.

The Louisburg defense also played strong as it posted its seventh shutout of the season and junior goalie Sierra Hahn recorded the clean sheet. Hahn also had five saves on the night.

“We let them have some looks early on, but the girls were able to clean it up a little bit,” Conley said. “After that I thought the girls played pretty well. We were a lot more aggressive moving forward and it didn’t seem like they were as nervous back there.”

Louisburg will try and make it two wins in a row tonight when it travels to Eudora. The Wildcats will also travel to Lansing on Friday to finish out the week.

Wildcats get back on winning track with shutout of Eudora



Louisburg sophomore Adyson Ross battles a Eudora player Monday during the Wildcats' home contest against the Cardinals.

After suffering its first loss of the season, Louisburg head coach Kyle Conley wasn't sure what to expect from his young group Monday against Eudora.

It didn't take long for him to figure out that they would be just fine.

The Wildcats scored two second half goals and the Louisburg defense earned the shutout in the 3-0 victory at the Wildcat Sports Complex.

Louisburg controlled possession, and despite a few Cardinal opportunities, the Wildcats improved their record to 6-1 on the season and got back on the winning track.

"When you have a team that is kind of young and inexperienced, you just don't know what that next game was going to be like," Conley said. "We were kind of nervous about it, but the girls responded well. We are a physical, strong and scrappy team, but Eudora is going to play hard every time.

"To be honest, I think Eudora did a good job taking away some

of the things that we wanted to do, but at the same time we did a good job exposing the outer flanks and attacked the outside. Reese (Johnson) just absolutely did a great job in that regard.”



Louisburg junior Reese Johnson fights through a Eudora defender during Monday's 3-0 win over the Cardinals.

The Wildcats got many of their opportunities on that outside and put 18 shots on goal, three of which found the back of the net.

Senior Olivia Barber opened the scoring in the first half with a shot from the right side that found the far corner and the

Wildcats took a 1-0 lead into halftime.

Louisburg could have had an even bigger lead, but the Wildcats missed on a few scoring opportunities in both the first and second halves.

"We were just pressing too much and were almost trying to play too perfect," Conley said. "That is not part of the game. We just need to take what they give us and go from there. We probably could have scored two or three more goals in that first half, but I'm proud of the way the girls responded and kept attacking."

Freshman Lola Edwards continued to be on attack mode early in the second half as she put the Wildcats up two with a goal. Fellow freshman Lexi Hampton followed suit late in the game with a shot from the left side that found the right corner of the net.

Hampton, along with sophomore Bree Gassman, recorded assists. Sophomore Adyson Ross and junior Reese Johnson also had shots on goal.

Barber led Louisburg with nine shots on target, while Edwards and Hampton finished eight and seven, respectively.

Defensively, the Louisburg back held strong and goalie Sierra Hahn recorded 12 saves on the night to earn another shutout.

Ross and freshman Hailey Sword also provided the Wildcats with strong play in the middle.

"We stood Eudora up and let them have what they wanted from deep," Conley said. "We tried to take away their through ball and they got us once there toward the end, but we did a good job covering. We could have been a little tighter and more disciplined in the back, but I thought defensively we played really well."

Louisburg will try and make it back-to-back wins when it

travels to Piper for a 4:30 p.m. matchup.

Wildcats lose first game of season to Spring Hill

Last week, Louisburg got a first hand look at just how good of a team Spring Hill was when the Wildcats went on the road.

Spring Hill scored three first half goals and the Broncos cruised to a 9-0 win over the Wildcats.

“Spring Hill is probably the best team I have seen since I came here in 2016,” Conley said. “They are incredible. At the same time, five of those goals we basically gave them because of mistakes on our part. They are legit and as advertised. They aren’t nine goals better than us, but they are really good. Our girls still kept playing hard in that regard, but we just didn’t execute so well.”

Wildcats off to best start in school history with win over Topeka West



The Louisburg girls soccer team has made a lot of history in recent years, and after Tuesday’s home victory over Topeka West, the Wildcats made a little more.

Louisburg defeated Topeka West, 5-0, and the Wildcats improved

their record to 5-0 on the season – which is the best start in program history. It was also the fifth consecutive shutout.

On a team where a majority of the roster is filled with freshmen and sophomores, the Wildcats continue to set new heights for themselves.

“I think that is something that this young team should celebrate,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “It was not an easy road and as many players as we have to replace, this really says something to their work ethic and commitment to each other.”

It was another dominating performance from the Wildcats as they have now outscored their opponents 30-0 on the year and got out to a quick start Tuesday.



Sophomore Tehya Harvey battles for a 50-50 ball in front of

the goal Tuesday against Topeka West in Louisburg.

Junior Reese Johnson opened the game with a goal and freshman Lexi Hampton followed it up with one of her own to give Louisburg a 2-0 halftime lead.

Louisburg was getting plenty of looks as it tallied 33 shots on goal and had 53 shots for the game. The Wildcats had a couple taken away due to penalties, but Conley was pleased with his team's attack, despite going against a physical Topeka West team.

"Throughout the Topeka West match, I felt our girls took their game to another level," Conley said. "We showed we could handle that style of play, and in fact, I think it motivated us. They girls locked them down in the second half and absolutely dominated. I would have liked our execution to be a little better, but when they put 10 kids behind the ball it makes it difficult.

"Playing against teams that do that help us quite a bit in the long run because it allows the players to work on their creativity and problem solve a little bit, which is fantastic for our freshmen and sophomores. Upperclassmen did a great job of leading by example and setting the tone for us. They stepped up and played extremely hard. Their leadership has been very valuable to our team."



Senior Emma Christy fires a shot on goal Tuesday against Topeka West.

The Wildcats continued to put the pressure on in the second half as senior Emma Christy scored her first goal of the season. A few minutes later, Louisburg was awarded a penalty kick and senior Olivia Barber found the back of the net to put Louisburg up 4-0.

Freshman Lola Edwards sealed the win with a goal late in the second half. Edwards, Barber and Hampton also had assists.



Senior Kennady Wilkerson pushes the ball up field Tuesday against Topeka West.

Defensively, the Wildcats never gave Topeka West a good luck at the goal as the Chargers had just two shots for the game. Goalie Sierra Hahn was able to earn the clean sheet.

Louisburg will have its toughest test of the season tonight as the Wildcats travel to Spring Hill. The match is set to begin at 6 p.m.

Louisburg girls continue dominance with shutout of Tonganoxie



Louisburg senior Olivia Barber controls the ball and makes a move toward the goal during a match earlier this season. Barber scored a goal and had an assist in Louisburg's 6-0 win over Tonganoxie last Thursday.

Youth doesn't seem to be bothering the Louisburg girls soccer team much these days.

All the Wildcats have done is win four straight matches to start the season, including Thursday's 6-0 victory over Tonganoxie at home. It was the first league match for Louisburg this year.

"The girls came out firing again," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "They played together and really battled. Tonganoxie has a couple really talented girls and they play hard and work really well together. I felt the girls took their game away from them and really did well.

"I was excited to see the girls get that first league win under their belt. We played well and limited their opportunities. We took away what they wanted to run, which allowed us to dictate how the game was going to be played."

Louisburg used the same recipe as it did in its previous victory over Wyandotte – two goals from Lola Edwards, two

goals from Reese Johnson, and a goal each from Olivia Barber and Bree Gassman.

The Wildcats also garnered two assists from freshman Lexi Hampton and one each from Barber, Gassman and junior Ruth Minster.

“Yeah, those girls are playing really well and just keep getting better,” Conley said. “They are doing a really nice job of taking what the other team gives them. Reese and Bree did very well to attack from the outside, Olivia did a good job in the middle and Lola was all over the field. She is developing so well and is becoming a major threat for us. The entire offensive side of the ball is doing really well and I am pleased with our improvement.”

Although, Louisburg hasn’t had to face much adversity on the back side, the Wildcats are still playing strong defense. They haven’t allowed a goal yet in four games and have outscored teams 25-0.

Against Tonganoxie, the Wildcats gave up two shots on goal and have allowed just five shots on goal for the season.

“The defense is growing each and every game,” Conley said. “They are sound and learning each and every day, a little more each time. We will get a stretch this week against Spring Hill, and it will be interesting to see how we respond.

“We are off to one of the best starts in school history. In 2019. the LHS girls soccer team went 4-0 to start the season with scoring 18 goals and did not concede any. This 2021 group has started 4-0 and scored 25 goals and have not conceded a goal as of yet. They are playing well and doing a really nice job of playing for each other.”

Louisburg will try for that fifth straight win Tuesday when it hosts Topeka West. The match is set to begin a 5:30 p.m.

Wildcats stay perfect with wins over Wyandotte, Atchison



Louisburg freshman Lola Edwards pushes the ball up the field against an Atchison defender last Thursday in Louisburg. Edwards recorded a hat trick in the Wildcats' win over the Lady Red.

KANSAS CITY KAN. – So far so good for the Louisburg girls soccer team.

Despite being a roster that is filled with freshmen and sophomores, the Wildcats continued their winning ways Tuesday when they traveled to Wyandotte High School.

Louisburg scored five first half goals and never looked back in its 6-0 victory over the Bulldogs. It was the third straight victory for the Wildcats to start the season.

“I thought we came out and played with a lot of energy and fight,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “The girls played very hard from start to finish, but I felt our execution could have been better. We were missing passes that we usually do not miss. With that being said, our vision was really good to see the passing lanes and what they were trying to do to us defensively.

“It was nice to have a lot of different scorers again, as well

as, getting to get every girls in the game for substantial time.”

Junior Reese Johnson scored her first goals of the season after assisting many of the Wildcats’ scores through the first two matches. Johnson had two goals on the night to lead the way for Louisburg.

Freshman Lola Edwards also had a big night with two goals of her own, but she also had two assists. Senior Olivia Barber also had a goal an an assist.



Senior Olivia Barber was all smiles after scoring a goal in last Thursday’s home contest against Atchison.

“Reese has been one of our best players all season,” Conley said. “She is playing extremely confident and really well right now. She is doing a lot of things right for us and being a great example of what we are looking for from our girls.

“Lola did a very nice job of finding her teammates and finding openings in their defense. She is really doing a great job of seeing the field and being coachable. She has done a nice job to start the season and I love how she is always looking to get better.”

Louisburg took a 5-0 lead into halftime, but added one more for good measure in the second half when sophomore Bree Gassman scored her first varsity goal in the process.

So far this season, the Wildcats have recorded three straight shutouts on defense and have outscored their opponents 19-0 to start the year. It is the kind of start Conley will definitely take from his young team.

“The girls have done a nice job of doing what the coaches ask of them,” Conley said. “We are still growing as a team, but I think each and every night out, their confidence is growing. This team is doing a nice job of taking what the other teams are giving us and exploiting that. I am excited to get to play our first league opponent to see where we match up. The girls will be up to the challenge.”

That next challenge will be tonight when Louisburg hosts Tonganoxie at 6 p.m. in its first Frontier League match of the season.

Wildcats roll past Atchison

Louisburg was able to pick up an extra home game on the schedule last Thursday when inclement weather forced the game to be moved from the Atchison grass to the Wildcat Stadium turf field.

The rain didn't seem to slow the Wildcat offense down at all as they scored four first half goals and shut down the Atchison attack for a 7-0 win at home.

The Wildcats peppered the Atchison defense with 23 shots on

goal and seven of them found the back of the net.



Sophomore Nova Ptacek passes the ball up the field during last Thursday's contest against Atchison.

"I appreciate how hard the girls are working and them wanting to improve each and everyday," Conley said. "They are supportive of each other and have been there for each other. We have been pushing them in practice and the girls have been responding."

Freshman Lola Edwards became the second Wildcat in as many games to record a hat trick. Edwards finished the night with three goals and fellow freshman Lexi Hampton added two of her own.

Hampton recorded a hat trick in the season opener and has joined Edwards as one of the team's top options up top.

“Offensively, we are still figuring out how I want them to play, but you can see they are seeing the runs and the passing channels,” Conley said. “We need to execute better but that will come. Hampton and Edwards getting hat tricks in the first two games is impressive. Had five different goal scorers and of that, four of them are new to high school soccer.”

Senior Olivia Barber was strong in the middle of the field for Louisburg as she tallied a goal and an assist, while sophomore Adyson Ross also scored her first varsity goal in the victory.

Sophomore Nova Ptacek and junior Reese Johnson added an assist each. Seniors Emma Christy and Madi Quinn each had a shot on goal, along with freshman Hailey Sword.

Week 1 Athlete of the Week: Lexi Hampton



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week one of the spring sports season, sponsored by Louisburg Family Dental.

Lexi Hampton, Freshman, Girls

Soccer

Louisburg freshman Lexi Hampton made quite the impact for the Wildcat girls soccer team last week. In her first ever varsity competition, Hampton finished with a hat trick in Louisburg's season opening win over Lansing. She then followed it up with a two-goal performance in the Wildcats' win over Atchison last Thursday.

In all, Hampton finished the week with five goals and had 11 shots on goal as she helped the Wildcats to a perfect start to its season. Currently, Louisburg has a 3-0 record to start the year.

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

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Hampton's hat trick leads Wildcats past Lansing in opener



Freshman Alexis Hampton splits two Lansing defenders during

Louisburg's season opener Tuesday at Wildcat Stadium. Hampton scored three goals and led the Wildcats to a 6-0 win over the Lions.

Kyle Conley wasn't sure how his Louisburg girls soccer team was going to look in its season opener.

The Wildcats have a roster filled with young, inexperienced players, and for the first five minutes of their match with Lansing on Tuesday, they looked the part.

However, those nerves quickly went away and the Wildcats let their play shine through in a big way.

Louisburg scored five second half goals on its way to a 6-0 victory over Lansing at Wildcat Stadium and it was what the Wildcats were hoping for in their first time out.

"When you look at how we played from the first five minutes to the last five minutes, I think you saw us improve quite a bit," Conley said. "We were definitely having some accidents on the field for the first five minutes until we finally we realized that we were okay.

"The girls are just competitors and they were battling out there. We were able to get a lot of kids out on the field, I think like 20 or 22 of them, so that was good to get everyone out there for the first time. After the first half there was a lot less yelling and everyone seemed a lot more comfortable."

A bulk of those goals came from players who had yet to score a varsity goal, including freshman Alexis Hampton.

The Louisburg forward opened the game with a goal in the first half, and then found the back of the net two more times in the second. Not only were those her first varsity goals, but it was her first hat trick in her inaugural outing as a Wildcat.



The Louisburg team comes together to celebrate Olivia Barber's (10) goal to begin the second half Tuesday at Wildcat Stadium.

Freshman Lola Edwards and sophomore Tehya Harvey also had their first varsity goals in the second half. Senior Olivia Barber accounted for the other when she opened the second half with the score.

"For them those were their first varsity goals ever, so I thought they all did a good job," Conley said. "Lexi really pounded the ball and had some great finishes and I am excited to watch those girls go and improve. It always makes it fun."

Barber also had an assist on the day, as did sophomore Bree Gassman and junior Reese Johnson. It was Johnson who provided the Wildcats with many opportunities on their 10 shots on goal.

"Reese did a great job," Conley said. "As a junior, she is just torching it up and down the line and she just gets it. She knows her responsibility and she did exactly what we

wanted her to do from her outside-mid spot for this game. She executed to the fullest and gave us so many good chances.”



Sophomore Tehya Harvey tries to settle the ball Tuesday against Lansing. Harvey scored her first varsity goal in the second half.

Louisburg had 23 shots against the Lansing defense, with five of those coming from Hampton. Barber, Johnson and sophomore Adyson Ross each had three, while sophomore Nova Ptacek, senior Emma Christy and Harvey each had two.

The Wildcat defense also did its job as they limited Lansing to just two shots and junior goalie Sierra Hahn was able to get the clean sheet.

The Wildcats will try for their second straight win at 5:30 p.m. tonight when they host Atchison at Wildcat Stadium.

“Obviously there are some things that we have to work on, but I thought it was good to see how the girls battled and competed,” Conley said. “It was good to finally play someone other than ourselves. We are still trying figure some stuff out, but this was only the second day that I have actually had my entire roster here, so we are piecing it together as we go. We have one down and hopefully we can keep it going.”

After a year away, Louisburg girls soccer ready to get back on the pitch



Louisburg junior Reese Johnson is one of three returning starters from the Wildcats' 2019 state runner-up team as they get back on the field for the first time in almost two years.

The last time the Louisburg girls soccer team was on the pitch, the Wildcats walked off with its second consecutive state runner-up finish.

That, unfortunately, was almost two years ago.

The Wildcat soccer team, along with every other spring program, is back at it after having its season cancelled last year due to the spread of COVID-19.

Last year was supposed to feature a team of 12 seniors that were trying to make their third straight state championship game. They never got that chance, and this year's team will look different.

Also, thanks to the success of the girls basketball team that finished third at state, head coach Kyle Conley didn't have his full regiment of players until yesterday's practice.

Louisburg opens its season at 5 p.m. today when it hosts Lansing.

"If last season taught us anything, it's never to take anything for granted," Conley said. "These girls are working incredibly hard and are focusing on maintaining the standard that the previous teams set. This team isn't last year's team, but they are going to leave their own legacy. The girls have done a nice job preparing and focusing on this team.

"This is a group of girls who are there for each other and play hard. With the crazy spring, spring break and girls basketball success, Monday was the first time I had my entire team at the field together. We have done the best we could to prepare for the season. This team is going to grow a lot throughout the season and it is going to be fun to watch."

The Wildcats return six seniors on this year's team – seniors that haven't played in a Louisburg uniform since they were sophomores. It is just one of the many things they have tried to work through.

"We did graduate 12 seniors in a season that never was last year," Conley said. "It was an incredibly gifted group of players that we are looking to replace. This group of young ladies are ready for the challenge, though. They have worked really hard and are a really young team with the majority of the players being sophomores and freshmen.

"This will be a year where more than half our team never

completed a high school season. We will have some growing pains, but this a smart and athletic group that will grow each and everyday.”



Louisburg senior Madi Quinn will be one of the leaders for the Wildcat defense this year.

Three Wildcats return from the state runner-up squad and will help guide the young team this season and it starts in the midfield.

Senior Olivia Barber and junior Reese Johnson will lead the Louisburg attack in the middle, while senior Madi Quinn will be one of the leaders in the back on defense.

Sophomores Bree Gassman and Adyson Ross will start also start in the midfield for Louisburg, and the Wildcats will look to a pair of freshmen up top in Lola Edwards and Alexis Hampton at the forward position.

Defensively, along with Quinn, will feature a back line of senior Melissa Meigs, junior Ruth Minster and freshman Hailey Sword.

Junior Sierra Hahn will be the team's starting goalkeeper after backing up Carson Buffington on the 2019 squad.

Even though they are young, Conley hopes his older players like Quinn, Barber and Minster, who were named team captains, can help guide the team through rough times.

"I think this team is going to be very dynamic," Conley said. "We are going to put up some goals and defend well. This group is determined with their play to be successful. They are pushing themselves for the greater good of the team.



Junior Ruth Minster was named as one of three team captains, along with seniors Madi Quinn and Olivia Barber.

“Our team is very even in regards to breaking down of classes on the varsity squad. This group is a good group of kids that are focused to get better. We also have solid leadership and that helps so much when they are willing to help teach, guide and lead.”

The Wildcats will also have a deep bench as senior Emma Christy, sophomore Nova Ptacek, freshman Bronwynn Williams and juniors Catie Lemke and Sammy McDaniel will all play in the midfield.

Seniors Kennady Wilkerson, Liz Guzman, along with junior Bailey Hallas and sophomore Brianne Kuhlman will serve as back up defenders, while sophomore Tehya Harvey could see some time up top.

The team, which has been practicing since early this month, is ready to break out and see what it can do, and that starts today against Lansing.

“As a coach I love preseason, but it drags on,” Conley said. “It’s fun to line up against another team and just compete. We finally get to do that against Lansing. As a coach, you are always interested to see how your team measures up to other teams. The girls are excited and ready.”

Top Louisburg Sports Stories of 2020



There hasn't been a year like 2020, and for most people, they are ready to put it behind them and forget it ever existed.

Still, with all the challenges that 2020 brought, there were still plenty of positives to talk about when it came to Louisburg High School sports. History-making state places and state medals were plentiful on this list, but it wasn't all positive. Louisburg had to say goodbye to a beloved town figure and athletes had to deal with the loss of spring sports.

Below are the top stories from 2020, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the explanation 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. Thanks to the cancellation of spring sports, I don't have the top 10 like I normally do, but I got close.

This year was a blast to cover, when I had the opportunity, anyway. Still, I am looking forward to what 2021 will bring. Thank you for everyone's support and can't wait for it all to begin again.



8. Ratliff-Becher wins state powerlifting title

After winning a state championship in 2019 Reilly Ratliff-Becher had every intention of backing up her performance during the Class 4A State Powerlifting Championships on March 7 at Piper High School.

In fact, the Louisburg senior wanted to improve it. Last

season, Ratliff-Becher took first in everything but squat, which she got runner-up.

This time around, she got the clean sweep.

Ratliff-Becher took first in bench, squat and clean and that led to her second straight state championship in the 180-pound class.

“It means a lot to me that I was able to win the state title again,” Ratliff-Becher said. “I set a goal for myself to win first in everything since I had got second in squat last year and I achieved it. Even though it wasn’t my best showing with the numbers I got on my lifts.

“The competition was very good this year, as it always is. But, fortunately with all the work I put in to at least maintain my numbers from last year, meant I was able to lift bigger amounts than my competition.”



7. Conley named state and midwest coach of the year

After a third place finish to end the year, Louisburg boys

soccer coach Kyle Conley was recognized among the state's best.

Conley was named as the Class 4-1A Coach of the Year by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association in November.

He guided the Wildcats to a 16-2 record on the season and the team's highest finish in program history when Louisburg ousted Rose Hill, 3-0, in the state third-place game.

Just a few weeks later, Conley was honored once again – this time on the girls' side.

Despite the lost season, the United Soccer Coaches wanted to recognize coaches for their past accomplishments and for what this past spring was supposed to hold.

Atop that list was Conley as he was named as the Small School Midwest Coach of the Year.

"I am absolutely honored to receive this award," Conley said. "There are so many great coaches in the Midwest, but to me this is a program award. None of this is possible without everyone involved; girls coming to work their tails off everyday, parents traveling and supporting us anywhere and everywhere, community helping with supporting the program, the school supporting the girls, etc. Without the support and buy in from the girls, parents and community none of this is possible."

The Wildcat girls program has had a successful start in its four years. Conley has a 54-22-2 record during that span, that included two state runner-ups and another state final four appearance.



6. Louisburg cheer places third at state

The Louisburg cheer squad had to do its postseason competition a little different this year thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It didn't seem to bother them much as the defending state champions found themselves right in the thick of things again.

Although they didn't repeat as champs, they were still among the state's best as the Wildcats cheerleaders finished third in the state back in November.

Unlike performing in front of judges like they did in 2019, the Wildcats had to video tape their performance and send it in to be judged. It fared well as they tallied 83.35 points to finish in the top 3.

Baldwin earned the state title with 88.85 points and Abilene was second with 85.25.

Members of the Louisburg cheer squad are Bella Feikert, Addison Drake, Brooklyn Harmon, Jayden Trester, Maddy Carpenter-Ross, Sophie Katzer, Sammy McDaniel, Julia Arriola, Andrea Gaza, JoJo Hendrickson, Sydney Dudzik, Abby Bradley, Anna Poe, Sienna Finch, Mable Graham, Audrey Anderson, Zoe Weers, Anna Morrison and Maggie Madison



5. Holtzen, Owens earn state medals for Wildcat wrestling

Ryan Owens and Cade Holtzen both had their own agendas going into the state wrestling tournament.

Owens, qualified for state last year, but left without a win and he vowed to fix that this time around. As for Holtzen, he came up short in his efforts for a second state medal as a

sophomore last season and had all the motivation not to come home empty-handed again.

Both wrestlers more than made up for their rough patches a year ago.

Owens and Holtzen left Salina with a state medal during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships on Friday and Saturday at the Tony's Pizza Events Center.



Owens made it to the semifinals and wound up earning a fourth-place medal at 120 pounds, while Holtzen finished fifth at 126 pounds.

It also marked the first time since 2016 that Louisburg finished the season with multiple state medalists, when Nathan Keegan and Mason Koechner each brought home medals.

The Wildcats nearly had three medalists as sophomore Brandon Doles finished one win shy of a state medal at 160 pounds with a 2-2 record.



4. Dennis steps down as LHS team doctor

Almost every day of the week, if you were looking for Damon Dennis, he could be found at his office on 11 S. Broadway St., helping treat those pesky aches and pains, taking X-rays, or mending those beaten up athletes after a game.

Doc D – as he is affectionately known – opened Louisburg Chiropractic Office 28 years ago and has served as the

Louisburg High School athletic team doctor for almost that same amount of time.

Dennis has seen it all. The walls in his office are lined with mementos from his years of service to both the community and the high school.

He has taped thousands of ankles, seen even more patients and has touched many lives during his time in Louisburg. That is why this week is one of the more emotional times in his life.

In May, he left Louisburg Chiropractic Office and handed the reins over to Dr. Jake Polzin. Add to that, Dennis also stepped away as LHS' team doctor and left an absence on the sidelines and behind the mic that many in Louisburg have come to know.

"My decision to step down and sell the practice has turned out to be the hardest thing I have ever done," Dennis said. "I have poured everything I have into my job and community. It has become my entire existence. I was taught from a young age to serve others and your community. I feel like the pressures I have put on myself have become unhealthy. I have put about 40 years work in to 28 and feel like there is never going to be a good time to make such a huge life change.

"That being said, I feel like I need to make changes while I am still able to do the things that will be best for my family. Dr. Polzin came along and I think he will carry on the work at the office wonderfully. We are a lot alike in many ways. I could not have found anyone better to replace me."

For many, Dennis has been a big part of people's lives, especially in the athletic arena. He has served as the LHS team doctor since 1992 and has treated many athletes in those 28 years.



3. Girls Cross Country Takes Third at State

For 23 years, the Louisburg cross country program has been chasing a top three finish at the Class 4A meet.

The Wildcats have had several teams qualify, especially in the last few seasons, but have always come up short of their goal. Following Saturday's race in Wamego, the Wildcats can finally stop running after it.

The Louisburg girls put together an historic performance at the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships at Wamego Country Club. The Lady Cats earned a state plaque with a third place finish as they surpassed Buhler by eight points to record the school's first top three state finish.

Junior Reese Johnson, sophomores Claire Brown, Bree Gassman and Nova Ptacek, along with freshmen Lola Edwards, Maddy Rhamy and Erin Apple, will all go down in school history as they became the first Wildcat team to bring home state hardware.

"It means the world to me to be a part of the first team ever to place at state," Rhamy said. "Coming into the state meet, I was just hoping our team would be in the top half, so you could imagine my excitement when our team placed third. I didn't even know we made school history until our coaches told us."

Rhamy was one of two freshmen who earned top 10 finishes individually, along with Edwards. Rhamy finished eighth overall in 20 minutes and 58 seconds, while Edwards was right behind her in 10th in 21:02.

Junior Reese Johnson also garnered a state medal as she was 15th in 21:28 to help the Lady Cats to an historic performance.

It was a proud moment for many in the Louisburg program, and included in that is John Reece. The longtime Wildcat head coach was all smiles following his team's performance.

"It is 23 years the making," coach Reece said. "You always have the plans and goals to get to state and then you get a group to go to state and do something great. This year was one of those. With the Frontier League as tough as it is, and then getting third there, put it in our heads that maybe we could do this. They all went out and ran their races, and that just shows their grit and determination and who they are."

A week earlier, the Wildcats also made history as it was the first time in school history when they qualified the entire boys team to the state meet as they took third at regionals.



2. Boys Soccer Finishes Runner-Up At State

As the Louisburg players huddled around their state plaque, many of them looked at it in awe and wonder.

“Hey guys, we won this,” a player shouted.

The statement was obvious at the time, but nonetheless, their excitement was more than warranted.

For the first time in program history, the Louisburg boys soccer team brought home a plaque from the state final four as the Wildcats defeated Rose Hill, 3-0, on Saturday in the third place match of the Class 4-1A state tournament at Stryker Sports Complex in Wichita.

It was only the second time in school history that the Wildcats had it made it this far, with the other being in 2016, when they finished fourth.

“There are only six teams in the entire state that get to end their year with a win and we wanted to be one of those teams,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We want to be able to hang up a banner on our field and we wanted a plaque so that no one can forget what these kids earned and what they did this season. I am so proud of all of them.”

It was a program defining moment for the Wildcats as they began the weekend searching for a state championship, but lost 2-0 to Bishop Miege on Friday in the semifinals. Still, recording the best finish in school history is nothing for someone to hang their head about, and the Wildcats came out Saturday wanting to make sure they brought some hardware home.

“It’s absolutely crazy to think about what we have accomplished this year, partly because I have only played soccer in high school,” senior captain Logan Faulkner said. “Bringing a state plaque back will just be a reminder of what we did and how we reached our goal.”



1. COVID-19 Cancels Spring Sports

In March, Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly closed all schools for the rest of the 2019-20 school year due to the spread of COVID-19.

When most students hear school has been closed, especially in the winter, cheers erupt. In this case, however, the tone was much more somber – especially among the senior class.

Proms were canceled. Any plans they had for a graduation ceremony were put on hold, and for more than 30 seniors, their last opportunity at playing a sport at Louisburg High School was taken away.

In fact, close to 200 students were planning on participating in an activity in the spring, but with no school, the Kansas State High School Activities Association followed suit and canceled the spring season the day after Gov. Kelly's declaration.

Students, parents and coaches alike have had to come to grips that a season they had been looking forward to all year, was never going to happen. Tears flowed, walls were punched in frustration and some were left speechless.

There would be no game days, no Senior Nights and no postseason runs. Athletes had to figure out how to cope with this fact and it was a challenge for the Louisburg girls soccer, track and field, baseball, softball, golf and swim teams.

Many of those teams had big postseason aspirations after success in 2019 and were left wondering what could have been.