

Louisburg girls soccer advances to championship match



Members of the Louisburg High School girls rush the field to celebrate the Wildcats' 1-0 win over Topeka-Hayden on Friday at Bethel College. The Wildcats will play in the state championship match tomorrow for the first time in the program's third-year history.

NORTH NEWTON – The Louisburg High School girls soccer program is now just one win away from accomplishing something the school has yet to see.

Louisburg defeated Topeka-Hayden, 1-0, in the Class 4-3-2-1A state semifinals Friday at Bethel College in Newton and advanced to its first state championship in program history. It can make even more history on Saturday.

The Wildcats will square off with Bishop Miege in the state championship match at 2 p.m., and has the chance to win the program's first state title. It would also be the first girls state championship in Louisburg history.

“For a third-year program, making it to state two years in a row and just the things these girls have done is amazing,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “I don't have a ton of club kids. I have kids that just bust their butt every day and that

is just what we do. We play hard, grind, we don't give up and we just keep fighting and keep working. All the people that said we didn't deserve to be here, all teams that said we had an easy path to state and we didn't do anything – just look at us now.”

It was an evenly played state semifinal match against Hayden, and both teams had their chances to find the back of the net early on. Wildcat goalie Shay Whiting made a couple big stops against Hayden to keep the game scoreless.

With 18 minutes left in the second half, Louisburg finally broke through.

Senior Bailey Belcher played a through ball down the heart of the Hayden defense and hit a running Mackenzie Scholtz in stride and Scholtz put it in the back of the net to give the Wildcats the lead.

“This feels amazing,” Belcher said. “When I played that through ball to Mack and it went in, I was like ‘Oh my gosh, we have a chance.’ We just had to keep it going. We are pretty lucky, but we have to be ready to go tomorrow.”



Sophomore back Trinity Moore heads the ball away from the Hayden attack Friday.

Last season, the Wildcats lost both games in their state tournament appearance, but no matter what happens Saturday, they have already recorded the best finish in the program's short history.

"Our goal was to get back here, but we still aren't satisfied with what we have accomplished," Whiting said. "We are going to go out and try to get that trophy. Being a public school, from a small town, people said we didn't deserve to be here, but we are here and we are here to win."

The road to this state championship appearance has been an interesting one for the Wildcats. More than three years ago, a group of Louisburg parents and citizens raised enough money to begin the girls soccer program and fund it for three years.

Louisburg is the final year of that funding, and while the program isn't going away, the team realized they needed to play for more than themselves.

"We played for the community tonight," Belcher said. "We have to remember that when they raised money for this program, it was just through this year, so I think we owed it to them to play well. I really think it might have helped with how we played and I think it was one of the best games we played all season."



Senior Savannah Reinhart (right) battles for the ball against Hayden on Friday during the state semifinal match.

All that hard work has put the Wildcats in a position to be named the best team in the state. However, they have one final road block – and it is a big one.

Bishop Miego, which defeated McPherson 2-1 in the other state semifinal, is the defending state champion and perennial power in Class 4A and the Wildcats know they will have their hands full.

“They are the best team in the state,” Conley said. “I don’t care what level you are, but year in and year out they are the best team. I will probably stay up half the night trying to figure it all out. If you want a chance to get a state championship, you are going to have to play the best team in the state and they are. We are going to have to be really good.”



Junior defender Camdyn Clark was one of several on the Wildcat defense who helped with the shutout of Hayden on Friday.

Despite the big obstacle standing in their way, the Wildcats won't mind playing the underdog role.

"We figured we would probably play Miego one way or another," Whiting said. "It has all fallen into place to where we wanted. We are the underdogs and we know it. It is going to be David versus Goliath, but we are going to go out and do our jobs."

Scholtz's golden goal sends Wildcats to state semifinals



Louisburg sophomore Mackenzie Scholtz celebrates after she scored the game-winner in the Wildcats' 3-2 overtime victory over Heritage Christian on Tuesday during the Class 4-3-2-1A state quarterfinal match in Louisburg.

As Mackenzie Scholtz's shot sailed toward the net, she could only help but wonder if this was going to be the one.

Scholtz and the rest of her Wildcat teammates had peppered the Heritage Christian goal with shots the entire match with not much success. Frustration was building and the Wildcats'

season was on the verge of coming to an abrupt end.

So, once she watched her shot find the back of the net in the overtime of Tuesday's Class 4-3-2-1A state quarterfinal match, tears started streaming down her face.

That goal gave Louisburg a 3-2 victory over Heritage Christian and put the Wildcats in the state semifinals for the second consecutive season. The golden goal emptied the Louisburg bench as they ran on the field to promptly pile on the game's hero.

"I just started crying immediately," Scholtz said. "I had been trying to score the whole game and I just couldn't get anything to go in. I was starting to give up and it was getting in my head too much. I saw the open shot and I just tried to take it. Then everyone came running at me and I just started crying even more."

Scholtz wasn't the only Wildcat overcome with emotion as several players ran onto the field, teary-eyed, knowing their chance a state championship is still alive.

"I am just so happy," senior captain Bailey Belcher said. "I literally cried after it happened and then the whole way to the huddle and then again when we met the fans afterward. I am honestly surprised that it stopped."



Members of the Louisburg girls soccer team pile on to teammate Mackenzie Scholtz after she scored the game-winning goal.

The match provided more drama than maybe some were expecting.

Earlier in the season, the Wildcats defeated Heritage Christian, 8-0, and had a 2-0 lead to start Tuesday's affair. The Chargers didn't back down as they scored two goals in a five-minute span that tied it up and eventually forced overtime.

Louisburg had plenty of chances as it took numerous shots on goal, including several on breakaway opportunities, but couldn't sneak it past the Heritage goalkeeper.

"The problem is when you play a team that you beat pretty handily earlier, it is hard to keep them focused and let them know that anything can happen," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley

said. "When they (Heritage) got that first goal, all of a sudden they had all the momentum and all the faith. We just could not find ourselves and they kept at us and we didn't finish balls that we have finished all year. Every ball went down the middle, but we just couldn't place it. It turned into an epic game with tons of pride."

Senior Bailey Belcher provided the Wildcats with the lead as she opened the scoring with a breakaway goal with 22 minutes left in the first half and Louisburg took a 1-0 advantage into halftime.

Belcher struck again in the second half as her goal with 27 minutes left in the game put the Wildcats up 2-0 and they seemed to have a comfortable advantage. However, Heritage Christian scored less than two minutes later to cut the lead in half and then tied it up shortly after on a goal from 25 yards out.

Louisburg regrouped and was able to put the two quick goals behind them and refocus.



Junior Kaitlyn Lewer (left) battles for position against Heritage Christian during the state quarterfinals Tuesday in Louisburg.

“It helped with Conley yelling at us, of course,” Belcher joked. “The girls then realized that it was our game to play and there is no reason that we shouldn’t go to state again, especially with how hard we have worked. We had a slow start, but we know what we needed to.”

The Wildcat defense tightened up in the final 20 minutes as the defenders Trinity Moore, Kaitlyn Lewer, Camdyn Clark, Skylar Bowman and Hannah Straub limited the Chargers’ opportunities. Goalie Shay Whiting also came up several saves, including a jump save in the first half where she knocked it out and a diving save early in the second half.

“Shay made a huge save there in the first half when she punched it out from 30 yards out and made another big save

where she stuck her bear claw out there,” Conley said. “She is back to playing well and confident. We just played a team that wanted to chip the ball in. We struggled a little bit to organize in the back, and unfortunately in our league we don’t see teams that shoot from that far out consistently like they did.”

Louisburg continued to apply pressure offensively as it dominated the possession and finally broke through five minutes into the overtime.

Scholtz got a pass from freshman Olivia Barber, drove it into the box and got it past the Heritage goalie for the game-winner.

“For a third year program to go to state twice now is incredible,” Conley said. “Mackenzie was getting herself in the right spot at times, but couldn’t get it to go through until the end there and it was a great moment.

“It was getting pretty chippy out there, and we talk about character a lot, and I told the girls to not let this define us. We have to support each other and then we started doing alright. They kids didn’t quit, never gave up and played their tails off.”



Senior Savannah Reinhart makes a pass Tuesday against Heritage Christian.

The quest for a state championship begins Friday when Louisburg (13-6) will square off with Topeka-Hayden at 7 p.m. in the Class 4-3-2-1A state semifinals at Bethel College in Newton. The Wildcats will either play McPherson (17-1-1) or Bishop Miege (12-6-1) on Saturday.

The third-place game will be at noon and the championship match will follow at 2 p.m. Last season, the Wildcats lost a tough semifinal match and ended up finishing fourth at state.

“I am nervous, but I am extremely excited,” Belcher said. “It is not often you see a third-year program get a chance to go to state for a second time. It is an opportunity that we need to take by the handle and something we need to work for. Last year wasn’t how we wanted it to turn out, so this year we are going to work for a better ending.”

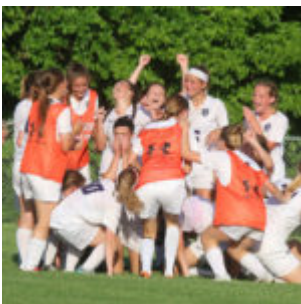
Conley knows Topeka-Hayden will present a difficult challenge for his team, along with whoever they will have to play Saturday.

“Hayden is a really good team,” he said. “They are strong and physical and it is going to be a physical game. It will be essential that the girls hold their own because they are going to go into every tackle hard. If we go soft and flail at it, it is going to be a long day. We are going to get back to tackling, be strong with the ball, running through the ball and getting squared up when you tackle someone because they are going to be very physical.

“We will be refocused and the girls will understand that we will have play better if we want to have more success.”

For a photo gallery from the state quarterfinal match, make sure to [click here](#).

Photo gallery: Wildcats onto the state Final Four



The Louisburg High School girls soccer team runs onto the field following the Wildcats' 3-2 victory in overtime over Heritage Christian today in the Class 4-3-2-1A state quarterfinals.

In an emotionally-filled contest, the Louisburg High School girls soccer team came thru in the clutch to punch their ticket to the Class 4-3-2-1A state semifinals for the second consecutive season.

Sophomore Mackenzie Scholtz scored the game-winning goal in overtime on a pass from Olivia Barber to give the Wildcats a 3-2 victory over Heritage Christian in overtime. The Wildcats took a 2-0 lead on a pair of goals by Bailey Belcher, but Heritage scored two second half goals to force overtime.

The Wildcats were able to hold off the Chargers thanks to some big defensive plays and allowed the offense to get its look at the goal.

Louisburg will play in the state Final Four beginning Friday at Bethel College in Newton. The Wildcats (13-6) will play its state semifinal game at 7 p.m. on Friday against Topeka-Hayden. The other two teams, McPherson and Bishop Miege, will play at 5 p.m. Louisburg will play on Saturday for the championship or third place.

Here is a photo gallery from tonight's victory. Congrats again ladies and best of luck this weekend!

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Junior Kaitlyn Lewer (left) battles for position against Heritage Christian during the state quarterfinals Tuesday in Louisburg.















Senior Savannah Reinhart makes a pass Tuesday against Heritage Christian.

















Members of the Louisburg girls soccer team pile on to teammate Mackenzie Scholtz after she scored the game-winning goal.



















Third time's a streak: Wildcats win regional championship



The Louisburg girls soccer team was all smiles following its 4-1 victory over Sumner Academy on Thursday in the Class 4-3-2-1A regional championship game. The Wildcats will host Heritage Christian at 5 p.m. tonight in the state quarterfinals.

KANSAS CITY, Kan. – The smiles and celebrations were abound for the Louisburg girls soccer team following Thursday's regional championship victory.

It was not an unusual feeling for the Wildcats as they won their third straight regional title following their 4-1 win over Sumner Academy at Schlagle Stadium – in fact – it is all they have ever known considering the program is only three years old.

So when Louisburg led by just one goal at halftime, the Wildcats regrouped and put together a solid performance in the second half.

“This is one of our goals,” senior captain Bailey Belcher said. “I told the girls at halftime that we haven't lost a regional championship game yet and we aren't about to start now. We needed to come out, play hard and keep progressing, especially now at the end of the season. I think we are doing that.”

Louisburg scored three second half goals to pull away for the win after a slow start to the match. Although the Wildcats dominated possession, they were unable to convert on many of their chances in the first half and allowed Sumner Academy to get a couple different runs on the goal.

Playing well is obviously a key for the Wildcats' run in the postseason, but Louisburg coach Kyle Conley isn't worried about the style points at this juncture – just the result.



Sophomore Avery O'Meara battles a Sumner Academy player for a 50-50 ball Thursday.

"It is definitely good," Conley said. "We want good things to happen and we want positive results, but sometimes you have to win ugly and that was a really ugly game for us. We struggled in the last 20 minutes to just pass the ball and that has been our problem all season on the road, especially on turf. It is survive and advance.

"I was super excited about a majority of effort and work ethic. I think the girls busted their butts out there and that is our goal. You have to go play the game and win it, and I think the girls did a real good job."

After a slow start to the match, Louisburg sophomore Mackenzie Scholtz was able to get the Wildcats on the board first. Scholtz pounded a goal in the back of the net with 24 minutes remaining in the first half.

Louisburg had a few more chances on goal in the first half, but took a 1-0 lead into halftime thanks in part to a pair of big saves from goalie Shay Whiting.

“I think we struggled at first and for some reason we always have a turf spell, but toward the end I think we started to click,” Whiting said. “On defense, we are just thinking too much out there at times and we need to take a step back and gather ourselves. Once we get that together, I think we can do some special things.”



Morgan Messer settles a pass Thursday in the Wildcats' 4-1 win over Sumner Academy.

Offense started to come together in the second half thanks to the feet of sophomore Erin Lemke as she scored a pair of goals, including one early in the second half on an assist

from Belcher.

Sophomore Skylar Bowman followed that up with a goal of her own when she sent a towering kick toward the goal, which took a high bounce and sailed over the head of the Sumner Academy keeper and went in.

After Sumner scored with 27 minutes left in the match, Lemke all but sealed the win with her second goal on an assist from Morgan Messer in the 60th minute.



Hayli Detherage (11) races to beat a Sumner Academy player to the ball during the regional championship game.

From there the celebration ensued, albeit a mild one as the Wildcats still have their ultimate goal sitting out there for them.

Louisburg (12-6) will host Heritage Christian (10-5-1) at 5

p.m. tonight in the Class 4-3-2-1A state quarterfinals as the Wildcats will try for their second consecutive trip to state after finishing fourth last season.

“It’s very exciting right now,” Whiting said. “We weren’t happy with the results out at state last year, now we have one game left to get back there so we need to stay focused. We have to take it one game at a time and that is what we are going to do.”

The Wildcats defeated Heritage Christian, 8-0, earlier in the season but they will be facing a Charger team that has won nine of their last 10 games to get to this point.

“Our side of the bracket is a little more favorable for us, but Heritage Christian is a good team,” Conley said. “They have one of the best center-mids in the state that no one really talks about and she is a fantastic player. We will have our hands full and we just have to play our game. They are a scrappy team and they play hard. We are going to have to get ready and keep working hard.”

Photo Gallery: Louisburg girls win regional title



The Louisburg High School girls soccer team celebrated their regional title Thursday at Schlagle Stadium following the

Wildcats' 4-1 victory over Sumner Academy. It was the Wildcats' third consecutive regional crown.

It was another regional title for the Louisburg High School girls soccer team tonight in the Class 4-3-2-1A regional championship match at Schlagle Stadium in Kansas City, Kansas.

The Wildcats put together a strong second half as they took down Sumner Academy, 4-1, to move on to the state quarterfinals. Louisburg will host Heritage Christian in the next round Tuesday with the right to move on to the state semifinals in Newton.

Sophomore Erin Lemke scored a pair of goals for the Wildcats, while Mackenzie Scholtz and Skylar Bowman each added a score.

Here is a photo gallery from tonight's contest. Congrats ladies on the win and best of luck Tuesday!

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Hayli Detherage races to be at Sumner Academy player to the ball during the regional championship game.









Sophomore Avery O'Meara battles a Sumner Academy player for a 50-50 ball Thursday.









Morgan Messer settles a pass Thursday in the Wildcats' 4-1 win over Sumner Academy.















Wildcats open postseason run with rout of Basehor-Linwood



Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher lets out a scream after scoring the match's first goal Monday during the Class 4-3-2-1A regional semifinal at Wildcat Sports Complex. Belcher finished with two goals and three assists in the 8-1 win.

The Louisburg High School girls soccer team had to go up against two opponents during the Class 4-3-2-1A regional semifinal Monday at Wildcat Sports Complex – Basehor-Linwood and Mother Nature.

The Wildcats had to dodge lightning strikes and were forced to sit out for a 45 minute delay five minutes into the match. It wasn't an ideal start, but Louisburg certainly made the most of a bad situation.

Louisburg scored its first goal 20 minutes into the first half and never looked back as the Wildcats rolled Basehor-Linwood, 8-1, to move on to the regional championship match. Louisburg will travel to Kansas City, Kan., on Thursday to meet Sumner Academy for the right to move on to the state quarterfinals.

"We did a good job for the most part," Louisburg coach Kyle

Conley said. "There are so many distractions with the weather, and the stoppages, and wondering whether we were going to get the game in was difficult, plus we needed to get the game in cause we were going to need the rest.

"The girls played well, especially when we moved the ball. When we weren't selfish, we did a really good job passing the ball and finding feet. We played to everyone, and when we get rid of that selfishness and just play, we are a really good team."

Sharing the ball was a strength for Louisburg (11-6) as it had five different players find the back of the net and five of the eight goals were assisted.

Sophomore forward Mackenzie Scholtz led the way with three goals and an assist, while senior midfielder Bailey Belcher had two goals and three assists to account for a bulk of the Wildcat offense.

Belcher opened the match with the goal at the 20 minute mark, then five minutes later, struck again on a shot from about 25-yards out to put the Wildcats up two goals.

Scholtz followed suit as she got the ball in the box, faked out the Basehor-Linwood goalie, and scored an empty-netter for the next Wildcat goal. Freshman Olivia Barber found the back of the net less than a minute later to help Louisburg pull away for a 4-0 halftime lead.



Louisburg sophomore Hannah Straub wins a 50-50 ball against a Basehor-Linwood player Monday in Louisburg.

The Wildcats picked up right where they left off in the second half as Scholtz scored two straight goals to put Louisburg up six. With 17 minutes left in the match, after Basehor scored its lone goal, senior Savannah Reinhart was fouled in the box and converted the penalty kick.

In the final minutes, Conley subbed most of his starters out to get his reserves some minutes and that time is something Julianne Finley won't soon forget. The Louisburg junior, who normally plays on defense on the junior varsity level, was put up top.

Finley got her chance at a goal as Louisburg was awarded a free kick just outside the box and her shot glanced off the Basehor goalie for her first varsity goal.

“I wanted to get everyone in and get some playing time and I told Jules to go up top, and she goes ‘Where?’” Conley said. “I just told her to go up there and run her butt off and give me five good minutes and see what you can do. Then when she got that free kick opportunity, she happened to be in the right spot. The shot went in and it was a pretty cool moment. The girls were pumped for her and it was cool to have things like that and make those lifelong memories. It is a lot of fun.”



Julianne Finley gets a hug from several teammates after scoring her first varsity goal Monday.

Louisburg’s defense held firm for much of the match as it allowed just the one goal and limited the Bobcats’ chances. It was rebound performance after allowing four goals to Spring Hill last week.

“Defensively I thought we did some good things,” Conley said. “We let them get some runs in the middle and they are really good up top. They come at you really hard and we did a good job shifting and covering. We got away with a couple things when we missed the mark, but we were able to stand them up for the most part.

“Our biggest thing right now is trying to get rid of the tunnel vision. We are trying to teach them to focus on what is going on around you and see the field – not just focus on the ball.”

The Wildcats will try for the regional title at 5 p.m., Thursday when they travel to Schlagle Stadium to face off with Sumner Academy. Louisburg defeated Sumner, 7-0, earlier in the season, but Conley knows it won't be the same this time around.

“Sumner is a good team and a much different team than what we played a while ago,” he said. “We have to get refocused and be ready to go. They had a lot of injuries the last time we played them and they are playing pretty decent right now. We have to pick up the intensity, we are going to ball hunt a little bit and just play our game. We are going to do our job and see what happens.”

Loss dampens Senior Night for Wildcats



Louisburg senior Savannah Reinhart shields a Spring Hill player from the ball Thursday during the Wildcats match on Senior Night in Louisburg. Reinhart scored a goal in the Wildcats' 4-2 loss to Spring Hill.

It wasn't the way it was supposed to go.

The Louisburg High School girls soccer team had plans to send its four seniors – Bailey Belcher, Savannah Reinhart, Avery Barber and Shay Whiting – out with a bang with a win over the region's best team in Spring Hill.

And for 40 minutes, it looked like it was going happen.

The Wildcats held a one-goal lead at halftime, but unfortunately they couldn't hold it as Spring Hill scored four second half goals en route to a 4-2 win Thursday over Louisburg on Senior Night at Wildcat Sports Complex.

"We played hard enough to win," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We just didn't execute and they got a couple bounces and beat us to a couple balls in the middle and they came out on top. The girls played hard, did a good job and represented the school and their seniors well. We just couldn't get the ball to bounce the right way. We had one hit off the keeper's face and then another with a shot in the penalty box and we just hit it right to her. It is what it is and we will get better."

The two teams went back and forth at each other in the first half as both had good looks at the goal. Whiting, the Wildcat

goalie, turned Spring Hill away on three different occasions with diving saves and Spring Hill did the same on shots from Hannah Straub, Mackenzie Scholtz and Belcher.

With four minutes left in the first half, it was Reinhart's turn and her shot was able to find the back of the net. The Louisburg senior hit a line drive from near the 18-yard mark that curved into the corner of the net to give the Wildcats a 1-0 lead at halftime.

Spring Hill tied it all up with 25 minutes remaining in the second half and started what was a string of four goals in 15 minutes. Two minutes later, the Broncos took a 2-1 lead, but the Wildcats came roaring back when sophomore Erin Lemke took a shot that found the upper corner of the net to tie it all up.

"We came out and played hard, with intensity and we just played the right way," Conley said. "Then they just kept coming at us up the middle and we just struggled to stay disciplined in the back and we let them get loose. Then we just couldn't answer. We struggled to play to feet a little bit and we didn't do what I wanted them to, which was to come back to the ball and play a little give-and-go.

"I think we played hard and we played well. I thought Savannah's goal was really nice to get us started and I thought Erin's goal was great to get us back even and I thought we were in good shape right there. We just could not keep our shape and it got a little crazy."

Whiting continued her strong play in goal as she recorded a couple more big saves to keep it tied, but the Broncos continued their attack and placed their shots in the right spots. Spring Hill took the 3-2 lead with 14 minutes left and sealed the win with another goal four minutes later.

"It was good to Shay bounce back with some confidence," Conley said. "She played with a lot more heart, played better and was

more assertive and aggressive. I think that she showed up and did her job and we needed that pretty bad.”



Six Louisburg seniors were honored prior to Thursday’s Senior Night match against Spring Hill. The seniors (from left) are manager Hannah Gurske, Avery Barber, Savannah Reinhart, Shay Whiting, Bailey Belcher and manager Jarod Rose.

The loss ended the Wildcats’ regular season with a 10-6 record as the four seniors walked off their home field with a bad taste in their mouths heading into regional action this week.

“All four seniors play their butts off and are committed,” Conley said. “They buy in and they work hard. It is going to be a tough group to replace with Bailey in the middle, Savannah on the outside, Shay in the goal and Avery giving us good minutes at outside back.

“It is a good group, but we are not done yet. The best part is that we are in the playoffs and we will see how far we can go. They are just good kids and they are what you want your program to emulate and stand for. They play the right way, but unfortunately we just couldn’t get a win for them.”

The postseason starts today for Louisburg as it earned the No. 5 seed and will host No. 12 Basehor-Linwood (6-10) at 5 p.m. to start its regional tournament. If the Wildcats advance, they will meet the winner of No. 4 Sumner Academy (11-5) and No. 13 Bishop Ward (6-10) at 5 p.m. Thursday at Schlagle Stadium. Louisburg defeated both Basehor-Linwood and Sumner Academy earlier this season.

“We are all on the same page now and everyone is even,” Conley said. “It would have been nice to be the No. 4 seed and hosting, but that isn’t how it worked out this time. We will just see how it goes, let the chips fall and just do our job and do the best we can.”

Scholtz scores six goals, Wildcat goalie adds another in rout



Louisburg sophomore forward Mackenzie Scholtz beats a defender during a game earlier this season. Scholtz scored six goals

Monday in the Wildcats' 11-1 rout of Ottawa at Ottawa High School.

Louisburg senior Shay Whiting has been one of the top goalkeepers in the Frontier League for the past 2-plus seasons.

So when she wasn't in goal in the team's match with Ottawa on Monday, it was a little different. Instead of playing at the net, Whiting saw action on the Louisburg attack.

It was a memorable moment to say the least.

When it was all said and done, the Wildcats celebrated their 11-1 win over the Cyclones at Ottawa High School, but one goal stood out among the rest.

Whiting got her first career goal in the second half as she got a rebound off a free kick and put it in the back of the net in the 68th minute.

"I decided to start Carson (Buffington) in goal, because since last summer Shay has been hinting at wanting to score a goal," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We spoke last week, and before the game, and I made the final decision to make her a field player. So as we started to progress throughout the game, we sent her in. She got a through ball right off the bat, but hit it over.

"Then on a free kick we got her set up for a through ball again and this time the keeper made a save but Shay followed it up for the goal. The bench exploded with emotion and Shay was ecstatic."

The score was just one of many positives for the Wildcat team as they were able to break through the Ottawa defense for several chances on goal and none took advantage more than

Mackenzie Scholtz.

Scholtz, a sophomore forward, scored a career-high six goals and added an assist. She scored three goals in each half and recorded a hat trick 33 minutes into the contest.

Senior Bailey Belcher also had strong game with three goals of her own and had four assists. Sophomore Erin Lemke scored the game's final goal in the 75th minute to enforce the mercy rule. Olivia Barber and Morgan Messer each also recorded an assist.

Louisburg scored three goals in the first nine minutes to take an early lead, but started to slow down offensively in the first half, but still had a 5-1 lead at halftime.

"We actually didn't play well in the first half," Conley said "We are still trying to find some consistency in our play. We show some signs of brilliance, but struggle to be consistent. The last 15 minutes of the game the girls got it and played very well. The kids finished the game at a high level and did a nice job."

Louisburg (10-5) will try to end its regular season on a high as it hosts Spring Hill on Thursday for Senior Night. The Wildcats will honor their four seniors – Bailey Belcher, Shay Whiting, Savannah Reinhart and Avery Barber – in a pregame ceremony before their 6 p.m. start.

"Spring Hill is currently ranked No. 1 in our region and we are ranked No. 4," Conley said. "Spring Hill is a fantastic team and are playing really well right now. It's going to be a fantastic environment for our Senior Night."

Wildcats split with Baldwin, De Soto in back-to-back days



Louisburg junior Hayli Detherage battles a De Soto player for a 50-50 ball Tuesday during the Wildcats' home contest. Louisburg lost the match 9-0, but defeated Baldwin, 3-1, a day earlier.

The Louisburg High School girls soccer team had an important couple of days this past week as the Wildcats hosted two teams that had beaten them already this season – one of which was atop the Frontier League standings.

Louisburg played back-to-back days Monday and Tuesday in hopes of getting a pair of wins. The Wildcats had to settle for one as they pulled off a 3-1 victory over Baldwin to exact a loss they suffered from the Bulldogs less than a week prior.

The Wildcats had to battle windy conditions to get the win, and despite letting the Bulldogs tie the match early in the second half, they were able to pull away with a pair of goals as the Wildcats dominated possession in the final 30 minutes.

“We played so bad the first time we played them, but the girls came out this time and played really hard,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “They played with intensity, we marked up tight and we pushed up the field. That is the way we need to play and the girls did a good job with it. Some kids played a

ton of minutes, and others just played a short amount of time, but everyone was engaged and in it. It was fantastic to see and the kids played the right way.”

Louisburg (9-5) got a big performance from senior Bailey Belcher as she recorded a hat trick and was responsible for all three Wildcat goals.

Belcher got things going late in the first half as she took a pass from sophomore Mackenzie Scholtz, took a shot, and put it in the back of the net to give Louisburg a 1-0 halftime lead.

Baldwin didn't waste any time in the second half as Anna Burnett tied the match in the first two minutes. The score didn't seem to faze the Wildcats.

In the 52nd minute, Baldwin was called for a penalty in the box and awarded Belcher a penalty kick. Her attempt was knocked away by the Baldwin goalie, but Belcher got the rebound and put it away for a 2-1 lead.



Louisburg defender Camdyn Clark looks to settle a ball Monday against Baldwin in Louisburg.

Then in the game's final minutes, Belcher sealed the win as she dribbled toward the goal and knocked it over the goalie's head.

"We had the right build up in the first half, but we were just missing that final pass," Conley said. "Then we finally broke through and the girls realized what they needed to. We had a couple of other chances that we should have just buried, and our finishing on breakaways has not been very good, but we did a lot better in the second half. That 25 mile-per-hour wind we had to play into was obviously a major factor as well, and there were some difficulties there, but I thought the girls handled it well."

Other than the one play early in the second half, the Wildcat

defense held firm against Baldwin team that scored three goals of its own just a week earlier. Senior goalie Shay Whiting had two big saves in the first half, but limited the Bulldogs' chances in the second half.

"We have a bend but don't break philosophy," Conley said. "You can let them have some hits, but you don't want them to be good looks. Shay had two or three great saves there in that first half and coach (Michael) Pickman has done a really good job working with the goalies. He challenges them each and every day to get better and they are responding."

Tuesday didn't go as well for the Wildcats as they fell to De Soto, 9-0, and suffered from tired legs against a talented Class 5A program, who is currently undefeated in the Frontier League.

The match was scoreless through the first 10 minutes, but De Soto started rolling thanks to a pair of goals and it was also awarded a pair of penalty kicks in a 10-minute span that helped them build a 4-0 lead – which ballooned to 6-0 at halftime.

"Playing back-to-back games was tough," Conley said. "We just had two freak plays that usually don't happen in soccer, and they definitely don't happen within 10 minutes of each other. We got down and we just ran out of gas. De Soto is a good team. They are very confident in their abilities and we just didn't play very well. This is the last time we are going to play them since they aren't in the league anymore.

"For a minute there I thought we were going to get mercy-ruled and Carson (Buffington) made a great save there to keep that from happening. Shay made some good saves too, but it was rough. It was definitely not how I envisioned the game going. We just got stretched thin with the game the night before and ran out of gas. Tomorrow is a new day and we just need to get better."

This week's will bring Louisburg its final two regular season matches of the year. On Monday, the Wildcats will travel to Ottawa for a 5 p.m. match and then will host Spring Hill on Thursday for Senior Night.

Scholtz, Belcher combine for 7 goals in rout of Eudora



Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher makes her way toward the goal during the Wildcats' match with Eudora on Friday in Louisburg. Belcher scored four goals in the team's 8-0 win.

Coming off a frustrating loss to Baldwin earlier in the week, the Louisburg High School girls soccer team wanted to show that its performance against the Bulldogs was all in the past.

The Wildcats took step forward in showing that Friday when they hosted Eudora.

Louisburg took on the Cardinals in front of a packed house of Broadmoor Elementary School students during an early afternoon match and the Wildcats didn't disappoint. They scored five second half goals and rolled to an 8-0 victory over Eudora.

"Wednesday we watched film, pointed out some things and

Thursday I gave them a little butt-chewing on how I wanted things done the right way," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We started getting lazy and not playing hard. Our goal this time was to just be high-pressure all the time. It wasn't perfect or great, but this is what we are going to do from now on. We are just going to come get people, play hard and be on our toes. I think the kids played much harder than they did at Baldwin."

Eudora had a difficult time in slowing the 1-2 punch of Bailey Belcher and Mackenzie Scholtz as the two players each recorded hat tricks in the win. Belcher finished the game with four goals and Scholtz added three.

It didn't take long for the Wildcats to get on the board as Scholtz scored two goals 12 minutes into the match and Belcher scored her first with three minutes left in the first half to give Louisburg a 3-0 halftime advantage.

"They ran off each other a lot," Conley said of Belcher and Scholtz. "I would like for them to give the ball up a little more, especially in that first half. We had other kids who were making the run and they just held it. They probably should have played that ball through a couple times and put others before themselves. They did work harder and I was getting after those two a lot because it starts from the top and goes back. Their response was good and was pleased with how hard they played."



Sophomore Erin Lemke dribbles the ball away from a Eudora defender Friday.

Just two minutes into the second half, Belcher had herself a hat trick when she scored a pair of goal right after halftime. Scholtz and Belcher each added a goal to make it 7-0, then in the 63rd minute, sophomore Trinity Moore was able to find the back of the net for her first goal and sealed the win for Louisburg.

Defensively, the Wildcats didn't give Eudora many good looks at the goal as the back line of Kaitlyn Lewer, Camdyn Clark, Hannah Straub and Moore turned away any runs the Cardinals tried to make. Goalies Shay Whiting and Carson Buffington combined to earn the shutout.

The victory improved Louisburg's record to 8-4 on the season and Conley still believes his team has a lot of work to do before the postseason arrives.

“We are behind right now,” he said. “We have lost two games that we shouldn’t have lost. Hosting a regional for us is huge. We are a different team at home, so we have to get after it here. (Today) and Tuesday are really key for us and it is going to be tough. We have to find a way to get positive results out of both games.”

Louisburg won’t have to wait long to get its revenge on Baldwin as the Wildcats host the Bulldogs at 6 p.m. today at Wildcat Sports Complex. The Wildcats will then host league-leading De Soto on Tuesday in back-to-back big games.

“I think the loss at Baldwin woke the girls up a little bit,” Conley said. “We just didn’t show up to play for whatever reason. Hopefully we will be ready to go up against them this time and show them we are ready to go. I think the girls are focused now and hopefully it will be a different game.”

BALDWIN SHUTS OUT LOUISBURG

Louisburg traveled to Baldwin last Tuesday in hopes of getting a big road win for its resume, but unfortunately the Bulldogs had other ideas.

Baldwin put the match away with two second half goals and the Wildcats were unable to get much going offensively in a 3-0 loss.



Goalie Shay Whiting leaps in the air to make a save last Tuesday at Baldwin.

“We were soft, hesitant and we were passive,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We tried to go down the middle the whole time and that is not our game at all.”

Louisburg had a tough time stopping Baldwin’s Anna Burnett as she finished the game with a pair of goals and Katherine Braun scored the other.