Buffington named 2019 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year



Not many athletes had the opportunity to experience the success Carson Buffington did during the 2018-19 school year.

Buffington found herself in two state

championship matches and was a team captain in all three seasons. The 2019

Louisburg High School graduate played at a high level in all the sports she

competed in and did so with the respect of her teammates of coaches.

Those are just a few of the reasons why Buffington was chosen as the 2019 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year.

The award, which is in its second

year, is to recognize an outstanding LHS student athlete. Louisburg Sports Zone

asked the head coaches at LHS to submit nominations and those nominations were

then organized and submitted back to the coaches for a vote.

The coaches then submitted their

top three choices and the number of votes were added up, which decided the

winner.

Buffington began her memorable senior

year on the volleyball court as she helped the Lady Cats to a state runner-up

finish for the second consecutive season. She was an outside hitter on the 2018

squad, which was a position she had to learn on the fly.

She spent the last two seasons as

the team's starting setter and Buffington made the move to the front line —

which gave her team the best chance to win.

Along with her state runner-up

finish, Buffington also earned second team All-Frontier League honors and was

named to the Greater Kansas City Volleyball Coaches Association Senior All-Star match.

"Carson was a great leader again this

past season and played a vital role on the team," Louisburg coach Jessica

Compliment said. "She handled transitioning to a new position with a lot of

grace and was bound and determined to learn the ins/outs of being a hitter,

than a setter. She previously ran our offense as the setter for two years. But

as with each new season, new players are added to the mix and the possibility

of changing positions/rosters arises.



(From left) Louisburg girls assistant soccer coach Michael Pickman, Louisburg head volleyball coach Jessica Compliment, Carson Buffington, Louisburg head girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry and Louisburg head girls soccer coach Kyle Conley

"I was very proud of how she 'handed' over the reins of the offense to two freshmen and how she encouraged and pushed them every day in practice. She was a great role model. Carson added a lot of emotional energy when we needed it and made huge plays at important times throughout matches."

Buffington was also a big part of the

Lady Cat basketball team this past season, despite finishing short of a state

tournament. She earned all-league and all-state honorable mention honors after

she averaged eight points, seven rebounds and three steals per game.

She currently holds a school record with 864 career rebounds and was an all-league player for her entire four year stint

with the Louisburg basketball team.

"Carson is one of the hardest working players that I have worked with coaching basketball, boys or girls," Louisburg girls

basketball coach Shawn Lowry said. "She never took a day off and always led by

example. Carson was relentless as a player and was always the first one on

the floor for a loose ball. As good an athlete, she is an even better

young woman with great character, integrity, unselfishness and passion."

Buffington might have had her most successful season, both team-wise and individually, in the spring as the Wildcats' starting goalkeeper on the Louisburg girls' soccer team.

For the second year in a row, the Wildcats were the Class 4-1A state runner-up and Buffington was a big reason why. She started all 20 games and set school records in shutouts (13), saves in a season (115), goals against average (.952) and wins (17).

With all that success, Buffington was named the Class 4-1A Goalkeeper of the Year by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association.

"Carson in her first year as the starting goalkeeper was unbelievable," Louisburg girls soccer coach Kyle Conley said. "She

kept us in a lot of games and even won us a few. Carson is in her third year ever playing

soccer as well. She started her sophomore year and has grown so much. She is a

gifted three sport athlete and it shows in her ability to play goalkeeper. She

has a fantastic attitude and work ethic."

Conley named 4-1A Coach of the Year; Scholtz, Buffington players of year



Louisburg coach Kyle Conley was named as the Class 4-1A Coach of the Year by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association for the second straight season.

Coming off its second consecutive state runner-up appearance, the Louisburg girls soccer team has had some

positive repercussions recently from its historic season.

However, none bigger came last

week when the all-state teams were released by the Kansas Soccer Coaches

Association. Not only did six Wildcats earn all-state selections, but they were

honored with some of the highest awards out there.

Junior Mackenzie Scholtz was named

as the Co-Offensive Player of the Year in Class 4-1A with Bishop Miege's Sophia

Stram after she led the Wildcats in scoring.

Louisburg was also recognized on the other side of the ball as senior Carson Buffington was named

the Class 4-1A Goalkeeper of the Year.

"Seeing Mackenzie and Carson recognized for their positional player of the years was fantastic," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "They both had incredible years."

The Wildcats weren't done, as for the second consecutive season, Conley was named as the Class 4-1A Coach of the Year as he guided Louisburg to a 17-4 record. He also led the Wildcats to three consecutive final four appearances.

"It is a great honor to be the coach of the year for the second straight year," Conley said. "It is extremely humbling to be recognized and voted by my peers. The part that gets left out of these awards is my assistant Michael Pickman. Without Mike, none of this is possible. He is there by my side, each and every day. He is as devoted and supporting as any friend I have. He's a fantastic coach in his own right. Especially, what he does with our goalkeepers has been outstanding. Our goalkeepers have been exceptional since the beginning and at all levels."

One of those goalkeeping students has been Buffington as she took advantage of her first full season starting in net. Buffington broke a school record with 13 shutouts, saves in a season (115), only allowed 20 goals

Buffington's biggest moment of the season came in the state semifinals when she saved three Topeka-Hayden penalty kicks that helped give

all season and recorded 17 wins.

Louisburg a 2-1 win over the Wildcats and a spot in the state championship.

"When I saw I was goalkeeper of the year, I was extremely surprised," Buffington said. "I had absolutely no idea I would

get it. It is

such an honor. It feels so amazing to receive this award, but without my

defense it would've been impossible. I thought I had my best season yet and I $\,$

was very confident and determined. It was definitely the most fun season I've

ever had and I'm upset it has to be over already."



Louisburg senior Carson Buffington was named the Class 4-1A Goalkeeper of the Year last week.

The honor came as a surprise for Buffington as she was named a second-team all-league goalkeeper in the Frontier League just days earlier. For

Conley, the all-state honors is what Buffington deserved.

"Carson, in her first full season, just had an impressive year,"

Conley said. "She broke and set some records that may never be touched. She

saved three big penalty kicks against Hayden for us. I have

been in the game a

long time, and in penalty kick shootouts more than my fair share, and it's

extremely rare to see a keeper at this level save three out of six. I honestly

felt with her stats she should have been first team all-league goalkeeper, but

it is what it is I quess."

Scholtz also had a record-setting season for the Wildcat offense

as there were times during the 2019 season that she couldn't be stopped. She

set school records for goals in a season (39), goals in a career (98), hat

tricks in a season (9), hat tricks in a career (18), points in a season (84),

points in career (235) and game-winning goals (10).

The Louisburg junior shared the award with Stram, who scored four goals against Louisburg in the state championship game and has committed to Saint Louis University.

"To win offensive player of the year with an SLU commit was really amazing," Scholtz said. "What that meant to me was it said that I played

just as hard as her and competed just as well. I felt really proud of myself

and I felt like I gave it all I had.

"I was really determined to make it back to the final four and I

was going to do whatever it took to get us there."



Louisburg junior Mackenzie Scholtz was named the Class 4-1A Co-Offensive Player of the Year.

Conley also liked what he saw from his junior forward that had a

big season in the Frontier League.

"She had an incredible year," Conley said. "Mac broke so many records and they were all impressive. It was truly a special season for her."

Along with Buffington and Scholtz, the Wildcats had three other

players earn first team all-state honors. Juniors Erin Lemke and Trinity Moore

were named as a forward and midfielder, respectively, while defender Kaitlyn

Lewer was also selected to the first team.



Juniors Erin Lemke (left) and Trinity Moore were first team all-state selections.

Junior defender Avery O'Meara was also recognized for her play in the back as she earned second team all-state honors.

"It is truly unbelievable to see so many

Louisburg Wildcats receive this tremendous honor," Conley said. "There are 25 teams

in the classification of 4-1A girls soccer, which is roughly 500-550 kids that

could be eligible for this award and based on our win percentage, we had six

student athletes eligible to represent our school. Every one of these young

ladies truly earned this tremendous honor. Mackenzie and Carson were fantastic.

Erin and Trinity attacked and had really, really good seasons.

"Kaitlyn and Avery were so good for us defensively all season. The defensive players do not always have the eye-popping statistics, only allowing 20 goals all season and posting 13 shutouts speaks volumes what our defensive group has accomplished. These honors are absolutely so deserving for these young ladies. They deserve so much in what they have accomplished as a team in our journey this year."



Louisburg senior Kaitlyn Lewer (left) was a first team allstate selection on defense, while junior Avery O'Meara earned a second team honor.

It is a journey that Conley knows couldn't have happened without the help from people throughout the community.

"These awards are fantastic, but all this comes back to the community raising all that money to start this program five years ago," he said. "When I took the job here at Louisburg High, Mr. (Darin) Gagnebin hired me as the head coach to start the program. He told me of the challenges we will have and to always be prepared to handle anything. If the community didn't raise all that money, none of this is possible. Over the past four years, I told the girls we are always playing for them. Everything we do is to represent our community. We do not take anything for granted. So I feel I need to do everything in my power to honor those people that raised the money, players that played in our program, and for the community members that pack the stands each and every night.

"Regardless where we go, we ALWAYS have the most fans. All those

people who go out of their way to support this team is what motivates us. As a

program, we talk about honoring those who wore the crest and those who support

the crest. Our play is how we can honor them. I could not be prouder of this

group of kids and their motivation to live up to our standard. This program

statistically has been one of the top programs over the past four years

regardless what classification you look at, but you have to keep in mind that

this is only the fourth year of our programs history. What these young ladies

have accomplished is been remarkable. I could not be more proud to be their coach."

Wildcats place seven on allleague girls soccer team



Louisburg juniors Mackenzie Scholtz (left) and Trinity Moore were recently named to the All-Frontier League first team. They were two of seven Wildcats selected to the all-league squad.

The Louisburg girls soccer team had another historic season as the Wildcats advanced to the

Class 4-1A state

championship match for the second year in a row and they had several key pieces

that helped them along the way.

Those pieces caught the eye of the

Frontier League coaches when they recently sat down to vote on the all-league

team. When all was said and done, the Wildcats had seven players on the

all-league squad and two first team selections.

"All-league was productive for us, but I felt we could have done

better to be quite honest," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "These awards are

only possible because of a fantastic group of girls around them. These type of

individual awards are only possible with a team."

Juniors Mackenzie Scholtz and Trinity Moore were selected to the

first team and were two of the team's main offensive threats. Scholtz was named

to the all-league squad as a forward and Moore as a midfielder.

Scholtz had her best season as a Wildcat as she set a school record with 39 goals on the season to go along with six assists. She also had nine hat tricks, which is also a new school record.

"Mackenzie was an absolute beast for us up top," Conley said. "She took great strides this season and has set the bar extremely high for herself going forward. I am really excited to see what next year holds for her."

Moore was an all-league defensive player last season, but made to the move to the outside midfield spot and handled her new position well. She finished the year with 12 goals and six assists.

"Trinity really adjusted well after a position change last year," Conley said. "She was very explosive and attacked a lot. She has a ton of endurance and that made her very explosive attacking the outside."

Louisburg's second

leading scorer, Erin Lemke, was also recognized for her effort. Lemke was named

as a second team forward after she finished with 14 goals and a team-high 17

assists on the season. She was one assist away from tying a school record.

"Erin is one of the hardest working kids I

have ever coached," Conley said. "She has only played soccer for three years

and she has grown so much. She is a handful to defend and plays with such a

high motor. She is a coach's dream with her work ethic and how coachable she is."



Louisburg junior Erin Lemke (left) and senior Carson

Buffington were named to the all-league second team.

The Wildcats' defense had a big presence on the all-league squad as senior Kaitlyn Lewer, sophomore Madison Quinn and senior goalie Carson Buffington were also named to the second team. Senior defender Camdyn Clark was selected as an honorable mention.

Louisburg recorded 13 shutouts on the season and a .952 goals against average, which are both school records.

"Carson is in her third year ever playing soccer," Conley said. "She started her sophomore year and has grown so much. She is a gifted three sport athlete and it shows in her ability to play goalkeeper. This is her first year as our starting varsity goalkeeper and she was incredible.

"Kaitlyn has been a shutdown defender for

us all season. She started at outside back, but was moved to centerback after

Camdyn got hurt. She shows up each and every day and plays as hard as she can.

She played fantastic. Madison is in her second year of playing soccer, and has

excelled at outside back. She at times might have a rare issue, but it's only

because of her inexperience. She has a great work ethic and that happy go lucky

attitude. She played almost every minute of every game for us this season.



Sophomore Madison Quinn (left), senior Kaitlyn Lewer (middle) were named to the all-league second team and senior Camdyn Clark was selected as an honorable mention.

"Camdyn was our starting centerback, but her season was once again cut short in our game against Baldwin," Conley continued. "She hurt her meniscus and will have surgery within the next couple weeks. She helped our team to 5 of our 11 shutouts. She was having a fantastic year until her injury. She started every game of her high school career from her freshman year until this injury. She put her heart and soul into this program and was voted by her teammates as captain the past two years. I feel she earned this nomination because of her play over the first eight games of our season."

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE SOCCER

FIRST TEAM

MIDFIELD — Caitlin Countryman, Baldwin, senior; **Trinity Moore**, **Louisburg**, **junior**; Mallory Smith, Spring Hill, senior

FORWARD — Anna Burnett, Baldwin, junior; Mackenzie Scholtz, Louisburg, junior; Kaylen Dawson, Spring Hill, junior

DEFENSE - Josie Boyle, Baldwin,

junior; Bianna Andrade, Piper, senior; Jalyn Stevenson, Spring Hill, sophomore

UTILITY - Kate Erpelding, Eudora,
sophomore

GOALKEEPER — Paige Ellis, Baldwin, senior

SECOND TEAM

MIDFIELD — Kassandra Green, Bonner Springs, senior; Ryia Richardson, Piper, sophomore; Anna Stockman, Tonganoxie, sophomore

FORWARD — **Erin Lemke, Louisburg, junior**; Jessica Thomas, Piper, sophomore; Anna Soetaert, Tonganoxie, senior

DEFENSE - Lauren Russell, Baldwin, sophomore; Kaitlyn Lewer, Louisburg, senior; Madison Quinn, Louisburg, sophomore

UTILITY — Riley Smith, Baldwin, freshman

GOALKEEPER - Carson Buffington, Louisburg, senior

HONORABLE MENTION

MIDFIELD — Emelynn Cruce, Ottawa; Lexi Miles, Piper, sophomore; Grayson Murphy, Spring Hill, junior; Mallory Putnam, Spring Hill, sophomore

FORWARD — Cambria Crowe, Baldwin, sophomore; Trinity Jones, Bonner Springs, senior; Lexi Dillon, Spring Hill, sophomore

DEFENSE — Mercedes Madlock, Bonner Springs, freshman; Camdyn Clark, Louisburg, senior; Kaylin Wisdom, Ottawa

UTILITY — Emma Tucker, Bonner Springs, senior; Olivia Morton, Ottawa, freshman; Riley Porter, Piper, sophomore

GOALKEEPER — Emery Mounce, Spring Hill, junior

2019 Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Year nominees



For the past three years, Louisburg Sports Zone has given out Athlete of the Week awards during each of the three sports seasons. I do it to recognize special athletic achievements and to highlight the athletes.

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

Although I am giving out the award, I wanted the process to be subjective, so I asked the head coaches at LHS to help me out. I asked each coach to send me nominations of who they thought exemplified the Athlete of the Year honor. They will then vote for their top 3 male and female athletes and then I will tabulate the results and determine the winner. In the next week, I will announce this year's recipients.

Below are the nominees for this year's award in alphabetical order by last name. Congrats to all those who were nominated and best of luck!

FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



CARSON BUFFINGTON — SENIOR — BASKETBALL, SOCCER, VOLLEYBALL

Carson was a 3-time letter winner in her senior season and was named as a team captain in volleyball, basketball and soccer.

In volleyball, Buffington earned second team All-Frontier League honors as she helped lead the Lady Cats to a Class 4A state runner-up

performance. She also moved from her starting setter position to the outside

hitter spot and had a lot of success for the Lady Cats as she tallied 130 kills

in her new position. With all that success, Buffington was also selected to the

Greater Kansas City Volleyball Coaches Association Senior All-Star Match.

Buffington also wrapped up a strong career for the Louisburg basketball team as she averaged eight points and seven rebounds to go along

with three steals a contest. She was named as a Frontier League honorable

mention this past season, and she also was selected as an allstate honorable mention.

In girls soccer, Buffington was the starting goalie for Louisburg in all 20 games. She posted 13 shutouts, which is a school record and had a .952 goals against average, which is also a school record. Buffington had 90 saves on the season that ended as a Class 4-1A state runner up for the second consecutive year. For her efforts, she was also selected second team All-Frontier League. Buffington was also named first team all-state goalie and was named Goalkeeper of the Year.



ANNA DIXON — SENIOR — VOLLEYBALL

Anna wrapped up her fourth volleyball season as a varsity starter for the Lady Cats and guided Louisburg to its second consecutive Class 4A-state runner-up finish.

Dixon, who is currently with the Kansas State volleyball team, ended her senior season with 584 kills and had a hitting percentage of

.260. She also added 325 digs, 50 aces and 42 blocks as she played all six

rotations. With those lofty numbers, Dixon earned several big time honors in

her final season.

She was selected as an All-Frontier League first team player and was also named to the 4A State All-Tournament Team. Those honors continued

as she was named the Kansas Volleyball Coaches Association Class 4A Player of the

Year and earned a spot on KVA All-State First Team.

Following the season, Dixon was also named as an Under-Armour All-American also earned MaxPreps/American Volleyball Coaches

Association Player of the Week honors.



ALYSE MOORE - SOPHOMORE - BASKETBALL, SOFTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD

Alyse is a 3-sport varsity letter-winner this past year as she earned letters for the basketball, softball and track and field teams. This past spring season, Moore went to state in two different sports and became the first Wildcat athlete in recent memory to do so.

In her first season in track and field, Moore threw the javelin for the Lady Cats and went on to become regional champion as she

eclipsed her personal best throw by almost 25 feet in just her third

competition of the season. The following week, she medaled fourth at the Class

4A state tournament with a personal best throw of 131 feet and 9 inches.

Moore was also the starting shortstop for the Lady Cats as she helped Louisburg to its first regional championship since 2014.

During the basketball season, Moore was a starter for the Lady Cats and averaged six points, five rebounds and three steals a game.



TRINITY MOORE - JUNIOR - CROSS COUNTRY, SOCCER

Trinity is 2-sport letter-winner for Louisburg this past year as she had state performances in both cross country and soccer.

During the fall, Moore was the top runner on the Louisburg

girls cross country team as she helped the Lady Cats to a regional runner-up finish and qualified for state as a team for the first time in school history. Moore medaled fourth at the Class 4A state meet in Wamego and currently holds the school record for the fastest time in program history. She also earned first-team All-Frontier League honors for her third place finish at the league meet.

In soccer, Moore was a starter on the Wildcat team that recently finished as the Class 4-1A state runner-up for the second consecutive year. At the midfield spot, she finished the season with 12 goals and six assists and was also named to the All-Frontier League first team.



DELANEY WRIGHT - FRESHMAN - BASKETBALL, CROSS

COUNTRY, TRACK AND FIELD

Delaney is a 3-sport letter-winner as she took part in cross country, basketball and track and field and competed at the state level in two of those.

Wright found most of her success in track and field as she earned four medals at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships

in Wichita this past month. She medaled in the long jump, 400-meter-dash,

200-meter dash and as a member of the 4×400-relay.

During the regional meet, Wright broke two school records (long jump, 400 dash) and earned a regional and Frontier League title in the

long jump. She also earned a medal in the long jump at the Kansas Relays

earlier in the season.

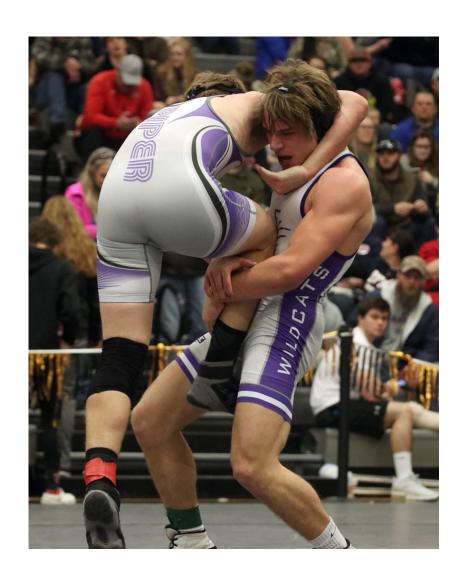
In cross country, Wright was a member of the Louisburg team that finished as a Class 4A regional runner-up and qualified for the state meet

as a team for the first time in school history. In basketball, Wright saw

playing time at the varsity level as a freshman at different points throughout

the season.

MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



BLUE CAPLINGER — SENIOR — BASEBALL, FOOTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD, WRESTLING

Blue is a 4-sport letter-winner in football, wrestling, baseball and track and field and competed at the state level in two of the sports.

In football, Caplinger was an All-Frontier League player on both sides of the ball as he was named to the first team defense as a defensive

back and second team offense as a multi-purpose player. On defense, Caplinger,

who helped Louisburg to a 10-1 record and a regional championship, had 31

tackles from the safety spot and also had two tackles for a loss, two fumble

recoveries and an interception. Offensively, he had 544 total yards and six touchdowns.

On the wrestling mat, Caplinger was a regional champion at 170 pounds and finished his season with a 33-5 record. The Louisburg senior

fell one match short of state medal with a 2-2 record at the Class 4A state

tournament. He currently holds the school record for most career reversals (72)

and most career escapes (86). Following the season, he was also named to the

KWCA Academic All-State first team.

Caplinger split time between baseball and track and field in the spring. Although he spent time as a reserve and pinchrunner on the

baseball team, Caplinger found a lot of success on the track.

He qualified for state as a member of two relays. Caplinger was a member of the 4×400 relay team that won the Class 4A state championship in 3 minutes and 25 seconds. Caplinger also helped the 4×100 relay to a fifth place finish and went on to garner two state medals.

Caplinger will join the Benedictine football team this fall.



AUSTIN MOORE - SENIOR - FOOTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD, WRESTLING

Austin is a 3-sport letter winner in football, wrestling and track and field and was among the state's best in two of the sports.

Moore thrived on the football field for the Wildcats as he helped Louisburg to a 10-1 record and a regional championship. Moore was a first team All-Frontier League player on both sides of the ball and was the league's leading vote-getter. He went on to rack up all-state awards as the Louisburg senior earned Class 4A first team all-state honors as a running back from the Topeka Capital-Journal and the Kansas Football Coaches Association. Moore was also named as a Class 4A first team all-state linebacker from the Wichita Eagle.

When the season was all said and done, Moore tallied 1,554 total yards from the running back spot, including 1,428 yards on the ground,

and had 21 touchdowns before he broke his collarbone during the regional

championship game.

With those numbers, he was named the Kansas Small Class Player of the Year by 810 Varsity and was All-Purpose Player of the Year by

Kpreps.com. Earlier this year, Moore was also named to the Kansas Shrine Bowl roster.

On the wrestling mat, Moore missed more than half of the season with his broken collarbone, but came back in a big way. Moore won his

first 14 matches when coming back at 220 pounds, which included a regional

championship. He went on to earn his first state medal as he finished fourth at

the Class 4A state tournament with a 3-2 record. He was also named to the KWCA

Academic All-State first team.

During the spring, he was a member of the Louisburg track and field team and threw the javelin for the Wildcats. He was also on the throwers relay that ranked Top 5 nationally at one point in the season.

Moore will join the Kansas State football team this fall.



KIEFER TUCKER — SENIOR — FOOTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD, WEIGHTLIFTING

Kiefer is a 2-sport letter winner in football and track and field and also went to state competition in two activities.

Tucker was a presence on the line of scrimmage for the Louisburg football team as he was a first team All-Frontier League player on

both sides of the ball and helped the Wildcats to a 10-1 record and a regional championship.

The Louisburg senior was among on the leaders on the offensive line as he helped pave the way for more than 3,500 yards of total

offense. On defense, Tucker recorded 55 tackles from the defensive end spot,

including three tackles for a loss, three forced fumbles, a fumble recovery and

a sack. Those numbers helped earn him honorable mention all-

state honors and was

also named to the all-state team by the Kansas Football Coaches Association.

The honors kept coming for Tucker as he was recently selected to participate in

the Kansas Shrine Bowl.

During the winter, Tucker was a member of the Louisburg powerlifting team and certainly made his mark there as well. Tucker won the Class

4A state championship in the 220-pound class and broke a 24-year-old record in

the bench press with a lift of 375 pounds.

In track and field, Tucker qualified for state for the first time in the discus. He finished as a regional runner-up and went on to take ninth at the Class 4A state meet in Wichita, just one spot away from earning a state medal.

Tucker will join the Emporia State football team this fall.

OPINION: Wildcats' journey a more impressive feat than state title



Members of the Louisburg girls soccer team break it down

shortly before the Wildcats' state championship game Saturday against Bishop Miege.

On the surface, Bishop Miege's

string of four straight state girls soccer titles is an impressive one. Anytime

a program can win the final game of the season in four consecutive years is an admirable feat.

The Stags have a great program,

with very talented players and a tradition that is second to none as far as

Class 4-1A programs go. They are the crème of the crop.

However, if you dig a little

deeper, you see a program — during the same four year period — that you could

say has made even bigger strides without ever winning a state title. I think

you all can take a guess where I am going with this.

A little more than four years ago,

a group of soccer parents helped raise \$39,000 in less than 12 months in order

to have a girls soccer program at Louisburg High School. That, in itself, is an

achievement worth celebrating.

Those parents and community

members would immediately see a return in their investment.

In the program's first season, the Wildcats would go on to win a regional title and finish one game short of a state final four appearance.

Louisburg wouldn't have to wait

long as it would win its first state quarterfinal game in 2017 and went on to

finish fourth at state. It was one of those improbable beginnings to a program that are rarely seen.

As it turned out, the Wildcats

were just getting started. In the last two seasons, they have advanced to the

state championship game only to come up short both times thanks to the big

obstacle of Bishop Miege.

What makes it all the more

impressive is the Wildcats have done this in a small town setting. The

Louisburg school district probably has an estimated population of 4,000 (give

or a take a few hundred) from which it can draw students.

Miege, a private school, can draw athletes

from both sides of the state line and all over the Kansas City metro area. They

aren't breaking rules, but they are using a system to their advantage (which is

a different column for a different day).

So, I ask, what is the bigger accomplishment here?

Since the program's inception,

everything has seemed to have gone right for Louisburg. The school made the

right coaching hires in head coach Kyle Conley and assistant Michael Pickman.

Both coaches have been invaluable to

the growth of the team and they have helped create a connection with the town

that I couldn't have imagined when it all began. They have great relationships

with their players, and the respect is mutual.



Louisburg senior Hallie Hutsell gets a hug from head coach Kyle Conley as she comes off the field for the final time, while fellow senior Leia Shaffer goes to hug teammate Mackenzie Scholtz.

It was all the more evident

Saturday as time was winding down and Conley began to sub his seniors out of

the game — one at a time — giving them one final farewell. Carson Buffington,

Hallie Hutsell, Kaitlyn Lewer, Leia Shaffer and Julianne Finley all left the

field knowing what they had accomplished.

After it was all over, senior Camdyn Clark — a four year starter — who was forced to sit out with an injury midway through the season, also said her goodbyes to her coaches and teammates.

Clark was in the starting lineup four years ago at Harmon High School when the Wildcats played

their first-ever

game, and it all came full circle when it was all over last weekend.



This was the first starting lineup for the Louisburg girls soccer team when the program began in 2016. Clark (No. 7) was a four-year starter for the Wildcats.

"I think what makes our program so

unique is that every year it's different," Clark said. "The dynamic changes,

the chemistry is new, but through our coaching and hard work that each girl gives,

we are successful. Our amount of skill, numbers and talent has varied every year,

but our determination and hard work is what makes our team so hard to beat.

"I knew our team would do big

things from the start because we had things to prove and we wanted to make our

community proud. They fought for this program and everyone who is on our team

knows we couldn't have done it without them."

They were the first group of

seniors who had the opportunity to stay with the program all four years. All of

them played roles on a team that won 17 games this season, but

also helped contribute to the team's past successes.

"It was extremely hard to step off

the field," Hutsell said. "I couldn't believe it was our last time playing

together. Everyone was hugging and crying — it was a bittersweet moment. ${\bf I}$

cannot express how proud I am of everything the program has accomplished in

four short years. That is more than my freshman year self could have dreamt of

at my first high school practice.

"I remember the first game in

program history and being so unsure about the season. But the past four years

has wiped away any doubt about the LHS girls soccer team. I think we have

showed everyone that we should never be underestimated and we have earned the

respect of other teams in the state. It wouldn't have been possible though

without Coach Conley and Coach Pickman and I can't imagine a better pair to run a program."

It is that bond between players,

coach and community that has helped the Wildcats rise to the level where they

are today. Sure, a few good players certainly help the cause, but the belief in

each other is what carries the load.

"When you look at our community,

they raised \$39,000 to start a soccer program four years ago and that is what

we do," Conley said. "We are playing for all of those people.

We are playing

for the town, we are playing for all the people on Facebook or Twitter that are

trying to follow along because we know that without those people that this

doesn't happen. We want to try and honor them the best way we know how, and

that is playing hard and doing things the right way. It is unbelievable. The

community is everything to us and everything to me."

So as the clock hit zero, their season was officially over. It didn't take long for realization to set in that this was it for the Wildcat seniors



Louisburg coach Kyle Conley huddles his team up following their state quarterfinal win earlier this month. Conley has guided Louisburg to a 58-22-2 record since the program's inception.

"Every year I looked forward to

soccer season to start and this year my season was cut short, so it was kind of

over before everyone else's," Clark said. "Having to accept

that my knee would

render me from being out there with my girls, made me feel so guilty and

helpless. I was supposed to be there for my team and I wasn't.

"The hardest part, however, was

watching them earn their second place state medals. It hit me then that $\ensuremath{\mathrm{I}}$

wouldn't be doing this again. I wouldn't have another chance to fight for a

plaque at state, I wouldn't huddle with my team before each game and I wouldn't

be with these girls next year. My fellow seniors and I were done and this was

our final mark on Louisburg girls soccer history."

So to recap, in four years time

the Wildcats started a program from scratch, captured four straight regionals

titles, made it to the state quarterfinal in its first season and then rattled

off three consecutive state final four appearances and two state runner-up finishes.

But for some that isn't the bigger

story. Winning it all ultimately trumps everything in our society.

Not for this group, though. Sure,

winning a state title will be great, but it is the family atmosphere that is

the Wildcats' biggest asset — starting with their coaches.

"We are a family and we will

always be there for each other," Clark said. "That is my favorite part of the

whole thing. The coaches have made a lasting impact on me and

will always be a

reason I am who I am today. Both of them have pushed me to be the best I can be

and have helped me through more than they know.

"From the start, I credit a lot of

our success to them. People who have never played soccer in their life have

become varsity players because of what Conley and Pickman have done. I had no

idea how to play soccer coming into the program and they have taught me

everything I know. They have been incredible influences on me and our team.

They're what make us a family."

Because when it comes down to it, family is what truly matters.

Louisburg girls soccer finishes second at wild state tournament



Louisburg captains Erin Lemke (left) and Carson Buffington hold up the Class 4-3-2-1A state runner-up trophy Saturday following the Wildcats 4-0 loss to Bishop Miege in the

championship game at Hummer Sports Park in Topeka.

TOPEKA — When it was all said and done, the Louisburg girls soccer held its team trophy high in front of the Wildcat faithful and the tears were easy to spot.

After nearly 200 minutes of soccer

in a nine-hour time period, including one match that ended in penalty kicks, the

Wildcats were spent. They gave everything they had.

For the second consecutive season,

Louisburg earned the Class 4-3-2-1A state runner up trophy after a wild victory

over Topeka-Hayden in the semifinals and then were shutout by Bishop Miege in

the championship game, 4-0. It was the third consecutive state final four

appearance for Louisburg.

Frustration and sadness was easy

to see following the Wildcats' loss to the defending state champion, but the

team realizes what they have accomplished in just four years of existence is to be celebrated.

"Being in this situation two years

in a row is something that doesn't happen very often," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley

said. "There are a bunch of teams that haven't been to a state final four and

we have been to three in three years. It is pretty cool and it is special."

It was a wild 24 hours for the

Wildcats. Louisburg was supposed to play Hayden on Friday in the semifinals,

but severe weather forced the postponement to early Saturday

morning.

The Wildcats battled Hayden

through four overtimes and eventually led to penalty kicks. After an intense

first five penalty kicks that left the match still tied, senior goalie Carson

Buffington recorded a big save and then senior Hallie Hutsell converted the

sixth penalty kick to break the tie and give Louisburg a 2-1 win over Hayden.



Trinity Moore battles a Bishop Miege player for a 50-50 ball Saturday during the state championship game in Topeka.

"We usually play 80 minutes, but

this time we had to play 110 minutes and we were gassed," Conley said. "We were

holding on and had some chances at the end to win it, but then we went to

overtime and then to penalty kicks. It was all about to see if we could survive.

Emotionally it was just a high for us and an unbelievable response and a great

finish. Carson making a big save, Hallie putting it in for the win - it was $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) +\left(1$

just a great game."

The two teams battled to a

scoreless first half, but Louisburg junior Mackenzie Scholtz changed all that

as she found the back of the net with 28 minutes left in the match to give the

a Wildcats a 1-0 advantage.



Junior Mackenzie Scholtz tries to beat the Bishop Miege defense Saturday in Topeka.

In what was a physical contest on

both sides, Hayden eventually found a crack in the Wildcat defense and tied it

all up with 10 minutes remaining in regulation. Neither team could get a score

in the first two 10-minute overtime periods, and then played

two five-minutes overtimes with the game still tied at 1-all.

"Each side really wanted to win

for a chance to play in the championship," Hutsell said. "Hayden had not

forgotten that we beat them for that chance last year and it showed throughout

the entire game and four overtimes. Everyone was exhausted, but the team kept

pushing and motivating each other and I think that's what helped us eventually win."

It all forced penalty kicks as

Scholtz, Trinity Moore and Morgan Messer helped Louisburg make three of its

five opportunities. On the other end, Buffington recorded two pivotal saves to

keep the Wildcats' hopes alive.

"We were not very effective in

taking PK's in practice so I was a little worried," Conley said. "We talked to

Carson on how to do things the right way, what to prep for, how to read it and

what is going on. She made three huge saves and there aren't many goalies in the

state that will make two of those saves in the bottom corner. It was a great

opportunity and a lot of fun."



Photo courtesy of Bryan Frank

The Louisburg girls soccer team celebrates on the field after Hallie Hutsell converted the final penalty kick in the Wildcats' 2-1 win over Hayden.

Both teams chose their next five

players to take the next set of penalty kicks, but Buffington recorded her

third save on Hayden's first try on the second round of kicks.

Hutsell ended it all as her shot

found the upper left corner of the net to end it for Louisburg and the Wildcats

were onto the championship match.

"When my name was called I was so

nervous," Hutsell said. "I actually had no idea my kick was for the win. I was

just worried that I would miss the shot. When I stepped up to the ball though,

some of my nerves went away because I knew the team had my back no matter what.

"When I made the shot I was confused because the team stormed the field. I remember thinking, 'We still have four more kickers.' But when the ref blew his whistle I knew and started freaking out. I was so proud of my team for battling it out and earning a place in the championship."



Louisburg goalie Carson Buffington runs in front of a Bishop Miege player for a save Saturday in Topeka.

Bishop Miege went on to defeat

don't think their

Buhler, 4-0, in the next semifinal match and the Wildcats had a little break

before meeting the defending state champion.

In the championship match, the Stags were just too much for the Wildcats and junior Sophia Stram provided a big spark. Stram scored all four goals for Miege in the title game, all of which came in the first half, and the Wildcats didn't have an answer.

"They are just so freaking good," Conley said. "I think the girls were mentally ready, but I

legs were quite ready, but we lost to one of best teams in the state of Kansas.

They have great players, they are well-coached, but our girls played their butts off.

"(Stram) is a Division 1 kid and she is special. They have a team full of kids who understand how to play and they are good."



The Louisburg girls soccer team poses with its state runner-up trophy following the state tournament Saturday in Topeka.

Louisburg had won 10 straight matches going into the championship game and the Wildcats finished their season with a 17-4 record. Other than the final result, it was a season to remember for the Wildcats, but they know they can take pride in what they have accomplished.

"It was a fantastic season, but it stinks right now," Conley said. "I hate losing, the kids hate losing and I hate

saying bye to kids who aren't going to be a part of our program anymore. Once I

have time to reflect on how everything transpired with 10 straight wins to

basically end the season, there will be a lot of positives. We broke a lot of

records this year that are going to be really, really tough to beat and this is

a really special group."

Wildcats advance to state semis for third straight year



The Louisburg girls soccer team celebrates its 3-0 win over Kansas City Christian on Tuesday at Wildcat Stadium. The Wildcats' win in the state quarterfinals puts them in the state semifinals for the third consecutive season.

The celebration was a little more muted this time around.

For the third straight season, the

Louisburg girls soccer team earned a spot in the Class 4-3-2-1A state

semifinals after the Wildcats' 3-0 victory over Kansas City Christian on

Tuesday in Louisburg.

The finish was anti-climatic,

unlike the past two years where the Wildcat secured a semifinal berth with golden

goals. Tuesday's match might not have had the same excitement, but Louisburg is

thrilled to be able to reach the state's final four for the third year in a row.

"It is a lot of fun," Louisburg

coach Kyle Conley said. "This was our goal, and that is what the kids wanted,

which was to get back and try and do better than they did last year. I

appreciate the kids and their effort and it is really cool. It is powerful and

it is a tribute to the kids and how hard they play.

"The kids just go at it every day

and it is just an incredible run they have been on. There aren't many teams in

the state that can say they have been to the state tournament three years in a row."

Louisburg, which defeated Kansas

City Christian 6-0 earlier in the season, went up against a more determined

Panther team this time around. The Panthers got the first shot on goal and

nearly had the game's first score, but goalie Carson Buffington got the save.

It also took a little time for the

Wildcat attack to get going, but Louisburg was able find the back of the net 13

minutes into the match.

Junior Mackenzie Scholtz scored

her first of two goals after junior Avery O'Meara sent a long pass over the

Panther defense and Scholtz raced to the ball and beat the Panther goalie for the score.

Ten minutes later, the Wildcats

struck again. Junior Erin Lemke sent a through ball to fellow junior Morgan

Messer, who found the back of the net and the Wildcats took their 2-0 lead into halftime.



Junior Mackenzie Scholtz races down the field on Kansas City Christian on Tuesday at Wildcat Stadium.

Despite the lead, it wasn't the type of play the Wildcats were looking for.

"The first half we had no purpose and we were just kicking the ball," Conley said. "The second half, we moved the ball and were attacking a lot more. We had plenty of good chances, we just couldn't bury one. The second half was much better and we

did a good job to get back on track."

Defensively, the Wildcats were stingy in giving the Panthers opportunities to score. Buffington recorded her eighth shutout in the last nine matches.

"I know we came out with a win,

but I know we could have done a lot better," Buffington said. "We probably

could have beaten them by a little bit more, but we are just going to have to

keep our heads straight, especially with the semifinals coming up.

"We were just more focused last

time around when we played them. I think we were playing hard this time, but ${\bf I}$

don't think we played as smart as we could have like coach
said."



Louisburg defender Kaitlyn Lewer clears the ball out of the

back Tuesday at Wildcat Stadium.

Louisburg controlled possession in the second half and had several opportunities on goal. One of those found the net as sophomore Olivia Barber played a through ball to Scholtz and she put the shot away for the game's third goal.

The Wildcats also had the

opportunity to play on the new turf at Wildcat Stadium, and while the team had

been practicing on it, it still took some getting used after playing on grass

most of the season.

"It was nice," Conley said of the

turf. "It was fast, actually it was really fast. I think our girls struggled a

little bit with it. When we are playing on grass, the ball likes to hold up a

little bit and we are ok to go. On here the ball just takes off and it is a

really quick surface. I think it will be good for us moving forward and help us

prepare for the surface out at state."



Sophomore Olivia Barber (10) wins a 50-50 opportunity with the help of teammate Trinity Moore on Tuesday.

Louisburg (16-3) will square off

with Topeka-Hayden (13-4-2) in the state semifinals at 5 p.m. today at Hummer

Sports Complex in Topeka.

The Wildcats knocked off Hayden,

1-0, in last year's state semifinal game and the Wildcats realize nothing is

going to be easy from here on out.

"We have our work cut out for us,"

Conley said. "They are a really good group of teams and the ones in the West

are pretty solid. We are just going to have to bear down and hopefully our

experience kicks in and we understand what it is expected.

"Hopefully their heads are right

in regards to our expectation and what the state atmosphere is like. We are

experienced enough where I don't think we will have that deer in the headlights

look anymore. We have to play a much better game and be more aggressive."

The winner of that match will play

the winner between Buhler (15-4) and Bishop Miege (11-7-1) at 2 p.m. on

Saturday in the championship match. The loser of each game will play for third at noon.

"I want to play in the

championship game and win state and the other girls feel the same way,"

Buffington said. 'It would be amazing to win a state title, but we are going to have to play well."

REGIONAL CHAMPS: Wildcats knock off Piper to advance to state



The Louisburg girls soccer team celebrated its fourth straight Class 4-3-2-1A regional title Thursday with a 2-0 victory over Piper in Louisburg.

The Louisburg girls soccer team is

one of the youngest tenured programs in the state, but at the same time, it is

one of the more accomplished.

Louisburg added to its list of

accolades Thursday when it hosted Piper for the Class 4A regional championship.

The Wildcats' 2-0 victory over the Pirates, not only avenged a loss from

earlier in the season, but gave them their fourth consecutive regional title.

Add to the fact that the Wildcats

are currently just in their fourth year of existence, makes each of these

regional titles special in their own way.

"The feeling is amazing," junior

Mackenzie Scholtz said. "Winning a regional title shows everyone how much work

we have put in all season and lets us prove to everyone that we work hard all

of the time.

"The feeling hasn't really changed

over these three years. It's so much fun getting to win in front of half of the

town and seeing everyone so proud of us. I don't think it will ever get old

because it is so exhilarating every time."

Louisburg finds itself in familiar

territory as the Wildcats (15-3) host Kansas City Christian (9-6-1) on Tuesday

for the Class 4-3-2-1A state quarterfinals. The Wildcats have advanced to the

state semifinals the last two seasons, including a state

runner-up finish last year.

Although the Wildcats have had plenty of success in past seasons, they realize they should celebrate the journey, and the win against Piper was no less special than the three previous regional titles.



Junior captain Erin Lemke puts a shot on goal Thursday against Piper.

"It is absolutely incredible what the

young ladies within this program has created in our first four years as a

program," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "I could not be happier with how

hard these girls play and how they play for our community. The girls in our

program acknowledge how much we owe the community for creating this opportunity

for these young ladies. We have been very spoiled here at Louisburg with the

success we have had. Four straight regional championships is unbelievable.

"We have our goals as a program and

playing for a regional championship is on our list every year. These girls

understand the importance of the work it takes to achieve something like this

and to not take it for granted. The girls were ecstatic with our win over a

really quality team in Piper. We felt that we had something to prove after

losing to them earlier in the year."

The Wildcats used that loss earlier in

the year to the Pirates as motivation and it was evident early in the match

that Louisburg wasn't going to let the same result happen this time around.

Louisburg was aggressive on the attack as

the Wildcats had several early opportunities on the Pirate defense, but couldn't

find the net in the first 20 minutes. From there, things opened up for Louisburg.



Louisburg senior Julianne Finley pushes the ball up the field against Piper.

Junior Morgan Messer got a pass from

midfielder Erin Lemke near the top of the box and Messer took the shot and

found the right corner of the net to put the Wildcats up 1-0.

Late in the first half, the Wildcats

struck again as Scholtz had a breakaway opportunity down the left side of the field

and beat the Piper goalie for an open net and the Wildcats led 2-0 at halftime.

"It was nice to get some goals early, but 2-0 is the worst lead

to have because as you get up two, you start to get comfortable and stop playing

as hard or as aggressive," Conley said. "We did a nice job of playing pretty

well in the second half, but the last 10 minutes was a little nerve-racking. We

made some adjustments but struggled to stay aggressive in the

midfield. The girls played hard and did a really nice job with having pressure and cover all over the field."



Junior Trinity Moore takes a shot in the second half of the Wildcats regional title matchup against Piper.

Piper did put some shots on goal in the second half to try and get back in the match, but the Wildcat defense held firm as goalie Carson

Buffington recorded her seventh shutout in her last eight matches.

The Louisburg defense of Kaitlyn Lewer, Madison Quinn, Skylar Bowman, Avery O'Meara and Hallie Hutsell has been a stabilizing force in recent

weeks and that includes senior captain Camdyn Clark, who was recently lost for

the season due to an injury.

"Our defense has been fantastic," Conley said. "Those young ladies all have played incredible. The defense has posted 12

shutouts and a

.882 goals against average. The girls are playing aggressive and being

fundamentally sound. I love how hard they are playing and the intensity they

are playing with. They have been fantastic all year."

Before the Wildcats' match against Piper, they were just coming

off an upset win over Spring Hill at home and they believed that helped them

against the Pirates and will continue to do so moving forward.

"We played a really good first half against Piper and our win over Spring Hill before that gave us momentum," Lemke said. "Both teams beat us

earlier in the year, so to pull off wins so late in the year, and in the

postseason, is exciting.

"The win against Piper was huge. We went into that game feeling like we had something to prove. We wanted the regional title, and another shot at state to motivated us through the game."



The Louisburg girls soccer team poses with the Class 4-1A regional title trophy following its 2-0 win over Piper.

Louisburg will have its shot at the state semifinals Tuesday against Kansas City Christian. The Wildcats, who will host KCC at 5 p.m.,

defeated the Panthers, 6-0, earlier in the season.

"It is going to be a big game,"

Conley said. "Kansas City Christian is a very dangerous team and have some

really talented players down the middle of the field. We will need to play our

game and play well to win. They are very fast up top as well."

Wildcats down Spring Hill to cap off emotional Senior Night



Louisburg players celebrate a 2-1 victory over Spring Hill last Thursday that ended their season with a 13-3 record and a No. 4 seed in the upcoming regional tournament.

The Louisburg girls soccer team has experienced an immense amount of success in the program's short history.

However, the one team that has been a thorn in the side of the Wildcats has been Spring Hill.

Louisburg has beaten

Spring Hill just one time in its four years of existence and the Broncos have

caused the Wildcats fits.

On Thursday, the Wildcats got rid of the thorn.

Louisburg ended its schedule on a

high note as the Wildcats upset Spring Hill, 2-1, and gave their seniors a

send-off to remember. The Wildcats honored their six seniors during a Senior

Night ceremony after the game and it was a fitting way to wrap up the regular $\,$

season with a 13-3 record.

"Everyone stepped up and did their

job and played as hard as they could," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "When

a team believes and plays for each other, this is what could happen. Spring

Hill is the best team on our schedule, and for us to get a win on Senior Night,

just doesn't happen very often."

Seniors Camdyn Clark, Kaitlyn

Lewer, Carson Buffington, Julianne Finley, Hallie Hutsell and Leia Shaffer played

in their final regular season home game for the Wildcats, and for most of them,

they were the first group of players to play all four years with the program.

"Our seniors have done a great amount to

put our program where it is today," Conley said "This group of young ladies are

exactly what our program looks create. They are all

responsible, dependable,

dedicated young ladies. They are fantastic young ladies not just on the soccer

field, but in the classroom as well. I could not be prouder of this group."

It was also special night for Clark, one

of the team's best defenders, as her season was cut short due to an injury she

suffered earlier in the year and will be unable to play in the postseason. That

didn't stop her from suiting up for a few minutes and was taken out of the game

one final time early in the first half.

"It was really nice to see Camdyn out there again," Conley said. "She

had a fantastic career for us and played her heart out each and every time she

got on the field. She is a great young lady and leader."

The Lady Cats' defense was certainly tested all night as the Spring Hill attack kept pressure on the Louisburg back line, but they all

passed the test — including goalie Carson Buffington.

Buffington turned away several Spring Hill opportunities as

Broncos had nearly 10 shots on goal and Buffington saved all but one

opportunity. The Louisburg senior had a couple tip saves in the first half that

kept the game scoreless at the time.



Louisburg goalie Carson Buffington dives in for a save last Thursday against Spring Hill.

Late in the second half, when the Wildcats had the lead, Buffington did much of the same and she also got some help from her defense.

Avery O'Meara moved to the sweeper position due to an injury and cleared the

ball away that was near the line and Kaitlyn Lewer also cleared away several

Bronco attempts.

Seniors Hallie Hutsell and Julianne Finley, along with junior Skylar Bowman and sophomore Madison Quinn, provided a lot of help for the Wildcat defense.

"Our defense played amazing," Buffington said. "They didn't back

down and they were so confident and played so well. I was very confident in

that game and I really wanted to win and get revenge on Spring Hill. My

teammates just made my job easier."

Junior Mackenzie Scholtz broke open a scoreless game for the Wildcats midway through the first half as she took the ball down the left side, beat the Spring Hill goalie and put it in the open net for a 1-0 lead and it stayed that way at halftime.

Spring Hill tied it up early in the

second half, but a few minutes later, the Wildcats struck again and this time

it was thanks to the feet of Erin Lemke. The Louisburg junior had a breakaway opportunity

and took advantage as she sailed it over the goalie's head for what turned out

to be the game-winning goal.



Louisburg's Emma Christy heads the ball away Thursday against Spring Hill.

"It was a hustle goal, just like

Mack's was to start the game," Conley said. "We talk a lot about pressing up

top and I think Spring Hill was struggling a little to adjust

to the ball

moving around in the mud. I told them to challenge everything in the middle. It

was good to see the kids play so hard and it was a big goal for sure."

Following the score, the Broncos

increased the pressure even more as they had a few opportunities to tie it up,

but the Wildcat defense and Buffington held on.

"We got up a goal and then we changed formations a little due to injuries and shore some things up in the middle," Conley said. "We were a little helter skelter there in the second half, but about halfway through we got comfortable in that and you could see that the girls start to figure it out. Then we got a little tired toward the end and we had to just hold on.

"Spring Hill had plenty of good

chances, but Carson made massive save after save. Avery saved one off the line

and everyone was just all hands on deck. Carson did really well and was on her

game. They tried to get her four or five times up top and Carson did a good job

of covering it up and tipping it away. Normally those are goals for most people

and she didn't allow it. She was phenomenal."

Following the game, it was a bittersweet feeling for the Wildcat seniors as they realized the end of their careers is near as

postseason play begins later this week.



Louisburg seniors (from left) Hallie Hutsell, Camdyn Clark, Kaitlyn Lewer, Carson Buffington, Julianne Finley and Leia Shaffer were all honored on Senior Night last Thursday.

"Senior Night was very emotional and really sad," Buffington said. "Knowing that this is my last Senior Night really

got to me. I love my team so much and I don't want the season to end."

Louisburg earned the No. 4 seed in the

regional tournament and earned a first-round bye. That sets up a match with

Piper in the regional championship game at 5 p.m. on Thursday in Louisburg.

Piper defeated Louisburg, 2-0, earlier in

the season and the Wildcats are hoping for some revenge, although they realize

it won't be easy. Piper, the No. 5 seed, defeated Tonganoxie, 6-0, on Tuesday.

"The regular season only matters for your seed and this is when the season actually starts," Conley said. "Piper is a

team that has already beat us, so we will have our hands full. We will prepare and play like we have something to prove."

Wildcats have won 7 straight after victories against Tonganoxie, Ottawa



Louisburg junior Erin Lemke sneaks a shot past the Tonganoxie goalie Monday in Tonganoxie. Lemke scored two goals in the Wildcats' 6-0 win.

The Louisburg girls soccer team didn't

let a little wet weather get to them earlier this week — in fact — the rain did

little to cool off a Wildcat team that has been on a hot streak.

Louisburg picked up a pair of road wins Monday and Tuesday and now have seven consecutive victories as the Wildcats have just one game left on the regular season.

The Wildcats scored 14 goals in

two games as they defeated Tonganoxie, 6-0, on Monday and then turnaround to

play Ottawa on Tuesday and came away with an 8-0 victory.

Bad weather forced the Wildcats to

move their game with the Cyclones from Ottawa High School to Ottawa University

and they were able to play on turf. That move certainly didn't slow the

Wildcats down as they jumped out to a 3-0 halftime lead and scored five more

times in the second half to complete the shutout.

"The girls came out playing very aggressive and dominated the game start to finish," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "The defense played very well for the most part only allowing one shot. Offensively, we struggled to get a shot on net the first half, missing on four extremely good opportunities.

"The second half, our movement was much

better and we were able to play our game. I was very excited with how hard we

played and how well we possessed. The girls played hard and did a nice job.

Junior forward Mackenzie Scholtz

continued her torrid scoring streak as she added a hat trick to her line to

lead the Lady Cats. Fellow junior Erin Lemke added two goals, including the

match's first score.

Midfielder Trinity Moore put the Wildcats

up 2-0 with a goal that was assisted by Leia Shaffer. Scholtz then added a goal

shortly before halftime to make it 3-0.



Junior Haley Cain heads the ball away from an Ottawa player Tuesday in the Wildcats' 8-0 win.

Scholtz found the back of the net to open the second half thanks to an assist from Olivia Barber and then scored again after an assist from Lemke made it 5-0. Lemke made it a six-goal match less than two minutes later.

Sophomore Emma Christy scored her first

varsity goal as she converted a penalty kick late in the second half and then

Louisburg got its final score on an own goal from Ottawa that was knocked in

after a corner kick from Lily McDaniel.

Against Tonganoxie, the Wildcats got out

to a slow start but picked it up in the second half after a goal from Scholtz

and another from freshman Reese Johnson. Scholtz, Lemke, Moore and Morgan

Messer each added scores to put the game away.

Goalie Carson Buffington recorded

shutouts in both matches, while the defense of Kaitlyn Lewer, Julianne Finley,

Avery O'Meara, Hallie Hutsell and Madison Quinn helped limit the opportunities.

"Tonganoxie played a very packed-in style," Conley said. "We absolutely dominated start to finish, but struggled to put the final pass together. We made some adjustments at halftime and made much better passes and possession.

"I was very happy with our execution in

the second half and our level of play. They girls played much quicker and

executed much more efficiently. We possessed and moved the ball very quickly

and were able to break down their 6 girls on their back line. I was very proud

of their second half performance."

Louisburg will try and make it eight wins in a row Thursday when it hosts Spring Hill for Senior Night. The match is set for 4:30 p.m.

"The girls will come out and be ready to play a really, really good Spring Hill team to honor their senior teammates," Conley said. "Our games

with Spring Hill are always action-packed and quality games. They are extremely

well coached and will come ready to play."