

Wildcats bounce back with shutout of Eudora



Louisburg junior Morgan Messer pulls back on the ball to beat a Eudora defender Tuesday during the Wildcats' 7-0 victory over the Cardinals.

Coming off its first loss of the season, the Louisburg girls soccer team made sure it didn't turn into two Tuesday when the Wildcats hosted Eudora.

Louisburg had four different players score and the Wildcats took care of business in a 7-0 win over the Cardinals. Despite being up just one goal at halftime, Louisburg dominated the second half as it scored six times and recorded its fifth shutout in six games.

"I thought the girls played well," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "The first half was a little rough because we weren't executing or getting things done. The second half they started executing and doing what we asked them to do. They played the ball, had some give-and-go's and played off each other.

"They were struggling a little early because we had nine kids gone the last few days and it was a

little tough to get things done at practice. The second half, they executed and figured out what I was asking them to do and they looked pretty good.”

Junior Mackenzie Scholtz got things started for the Wildcats with a goal midway through the first half and the Wildcats took a 1-0 lead into halftime. In the second half, the flood gates opened for Louisburg as it dominated possession.

Scholtz, who finished the match with a hat trick, scored shortly after halftime and then assisted on the Wildcats’ next goal when junior Erin Lemke found the back of the net.

The combination of Scholtz and Lemke struck again. Midway through the second half, Scholtz took a shot on goal, which was knocked out by the Eudora goalie, but Lemke was there for the rebound near the net and put it away for a 4-0 advantage.



Junior Haley Cain goes up for a header Tuesday during the Wildcats' home match with Eudora.

A few minutes later, Scholtz completed her hat trick thanks to an assist from junior Morgan Messer. Junior Trinity Moore followed with a goal of her own late in the second half.

With under a minute left, the Wildcats sealed the win as senior Hallie Hutsell scored her first goal of the season and the celebration was on.

"For Hallie, we just played the ball down the middle and she was able to just beat the girl and it worked out pretty well," Conley said. "Hallie hasn't had one for a while, so that was a

good to see her get one there.”

Eudora didn't have many chances of its own as the Louisburg defense turned away whatever runs the Cardinals tried to make. It was also the fifth shutout for Wildcat goalie Carson Buffington on the season.

The large second half lead allowed Conley to move players around to different positions and give his bench players more varsity time – something he has been able to do in several matches this year.

It is something that he hopes pays off in the long run on both levels of the team.

“I think we were able to get 20 kids into the game and that is great,” Conley said. “We are able to get kids in and getting them used to being out there and what to expect. I think it also helps them on the junior varsity level because the game is faster up here. I hope it pays dividends because you never know what injuries we might have later in the year. We are just trying to put kids into different spots and see what they can do.”

Louisburg (5-1) will face a tough road test today when the Wildcats travel to Piper for a 6 p.m. match. The

Pirates are 7-1 on the season and Conley knows his team is going to have to be ready to play.

“They have a new coach so it is going to be vastly different from last year,” Conley said. “They are very talented up top and on the outside and we are going to have to

deal with that.

I think it is going to be a really good game. They have a really talented

centerback and a solid goalkeeper, so it will be another dogfight. It should be

another great game and hopefully we will be ready to go.”

Wildcats suffer first loss with setback at Spring Hill



Louisburg goalie Carson Buffington comes out to save Wednesday during the Wildcats' road contest at Spring Hill. The Wildcats fell to Spring Hill 4-2, which is their first loss of the season.

SPRING HILL – The Louisburg girls soccer team had been unstoppable going into Wednesday's road match with Spring Hill.

Louisburg won its first four matches to start the season and did so by outscoring its opponents by 19 goals.

The Wildcats were on cruise control, but came up against a talented Spring Hill squad that tested them in every facet of the game.

Although the Wildcats took an

early lead, and were in a tie match late in the contest, the Broncos used two late goals to give Louisburg its first defeat of the season in a 4-2 loss at Spring Hill High School.

"I thought our girls played their tails off," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We played with a massive amount of energy and played really hard. Spring Hill is a quality team. In fact, they one of the best teams we will face all year. Not only were they very skilled, but they had speed a lot of positions. The game gave us a lot to work on and things for us to improve on. I am proud of how we competed."

The Wildcats (4-1) got on the board first when junior Mackenzie Scholtz received a through ball from teammate Trinity Moore. Scholtz then beat the Bronco defense and placed the shot in the back of the net to give Louisburg a 1-0 lead midway through the first half.

Spring Hill tied it up with three minutes remaining before halftime and then carried that momentum into the second half when it scored two minutes in off a corner kick to take a 2-1 advantage.

With 25 minutes left in the match, the Wildcats evened the score when junior Erin Lemke beat the Spring Hill goalie to the ball near the top of the box and then put away an empty-netter.



Louisburg junior Erin Lemke beats the Spring Hill goalie to the ball and scored the tying goal in the second half.

The Broncos, however, put the game away in the final minutes. Spring Hill took the lead on a goal with six minutes remaining and then added another four minutes later to all but seal the win.

Spring Hill controlled the possession at times, but the Wildcat defense was able to turn away several Bronco scoring attempts and goalie Carson Buffington had some big saves. It was a match that was closer than the score indicated and Conley was pleased with the effort his team showed.

"This team has a massive amount of team chemistry," he said. "They are extremely competitive and play for each other. The girls play hard from start to finish. I was so excited with our fight and not backing down. We talked about the quote, 'Bend, don't break.' Regardless if something negative or positive happens, we need to stay level headed and keep competing. The girls did just that. We made a few mistakes that Spring Hill capitalized on. We will work to clean those

up and get better at practice.”

Their four-game winning streak may have gone away, but the Wildcats accomplished a lot during that stretch and it started with their defense.

Louisburg shut out each of its four opponents thanks to the back five of Kaitlyn Lewer, Camdyn Clark, Madison Quinn, Avery O’Meara and Hallie Hutsell, along with the efforts of Buffington.

“The defense was absolutely lights out so far to start our season,” Conley said. “Even against Spring Hill, I think we defended well and gave them shots from distance. We did a nice job of executing our game plan. The first four games we were extremely impressive. The defense and goalkeepers had 356 minutes and 4 seconds of shutout soccer. That’s incredible. I am extremely happy with our defensive core and their improvement each and every day.”

Offensively, the Wildcats also got good production from Scholtz and she was on a goal-scoring tear during that stretch. Scholtz scored 13 goals in her first four matches and currently has 14 for the season.

“Mac has been on fire for us the first five games,” Conley said. “It will be hard to imagine anyone in the state having that many goals so far this season. She is absolutely on fire. To make that

stat even more impressive, she has been limited in minutes because the games were so lopsided. She is off to a terrific start and is going to have a great year.”

The Wildcats will try and get back on the winning track Tuesday when it hosts Eudora. The match is set to begin at 6 p.m. at the Wildcat Sports Complex.

LOUISBURG SHUTS OUT KANSAS CITY CHRISTIAN

The day before Louisburg was supposed to play its toughest match on the road against Spring Hill, the Wildcats hit the road Tuesday to square off with Kansas City Christian.

As it turned out, it was a nice tune-up for the Wildcats as they shut out KCC, 6-0, at Johnson County Community College.

The Wildcat offensive attack was on full display from the get-go as they scored in the first minute on a goal from junior Mackenzie Scholtz and never looked back. In fact, the Wildcats got four goals from Scholtz as she recorded her fourth consecutive hat trick.

Louisburg also had a pair of goals from junior Erin Lemke and assists from junior Trinity Moore, sophomore Olivia Barber and freshman Reese Johnson. It was as an all-around strong performance from the Wildcat offense.

“We came out slow in the previous week against Bonner Springs, so we focused a lot on being ready to

play," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "The moment the girls got off the bus the girls were ready. We come out and had some great combination play and scored in the first 30 seconds of the game. Our girls played extremely hard and aggressive.

"I was really pleased with how well we worked and battled. We played very well and did a fantastic job limiting dangerous opportunities. We got the opportunity to get a lot of people in the game and get some reps. It was nice because those kids work so hard in practice to get their chance to get some varsity time."

The defense was also a strong point for the Wildcats as senior goalie Carson Buffington earned her fourth consecutive shutout and the back line of Kaitlyn Lewer, Camdyn Clark and Madison Quinn helped limit the chances.

Wildcats record third straight shutout in win over Tonganoxie



Louisburg junior Mackenzie Scholtz scored three goals Wednesday in the Wildcats' 5-0 win over Tonganoxie in Louisburg.

It may just be a little more than a week into its season, but the Louisburg girls soccer team couldn't have asked for a better start.

The Wildcats picked up two wins this week, including a 5-0 shutout of Tonganoxie on Wednesday in Louisburg, and have played dominant soccer in its first three games. Louisburg has outscored its opponents, 13-0, to begin the year and the defending state runner-ups have yet to be tested.

Louisburg (3-0) dominated possession against Tonganoxie in what was its second game in as many days. The Wildcats had several chances on goal, and when the Chieftains tried to push up the field, the Louisburg defense was there to turn it away.

It was a balanced effort from the Wildcats as it was a match that saw several players get into the game and get some varsity experience.

"The girls played hard," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "To be quite honest, I think for the first 40 minutes

we were just going through the motions. We just talked to the girls about playing our game, and Tonganoxie played a little different by putting five girls in the back and three kids in the middle to take away how we play.

“We were solid, but we just needed to move the ball a little better and I think we did fine. It was a good night to get everyone in and get good reps for everyone. When we played our game, it was much cleaner so that was good to see.”

Junior Mackenzie Scholtz continued her scoring tear against the Chieftains as she scored the game's first three goals and gave the Wildcats a 3-0 halftime lead. It was the third consecutive hat trick of the season for Scholtz and she currently has nine goals on the year.

Trinity Moore got into the scoring action in the second half. Moore, who was also celebrating a birthday Wednesday, gave herself a couple nice presents.

The Louisburg junior took a shot toward the goal that bounced over the goalie's head and rolled just across the line to put Wildcats up 4-0. About 30 seconds later, Moore struck again with another goal and all but sealed the win for Louisburg.



Senior Leia Shaffer goes for a flip throw Wednesday during the Wildcats' home game against Tonganoxie.

Several Wildcats had good looks at the goal, including junior Erin Lemke, who had a nice through ball to Schultz in the first half that led one of her three goals.

The Wildcats also had to make some adjustments throughout the game as the Chieftains played several players back to try and limit the Louisburg runs. It might have slowed them down a little, but the Wildcats figured it out.

"The best part is the progression that we made," Conley said. "We constantly kept moving and we were problem solving and changing formations a little bit in the midfield. We made some different runs because of what Tonganoxie took away and it was

good to see the girls learning and adapting to how it is being played. We had a bunch of good looks at the end and we got to play a bunch of kids. The girls just played hard and had great attitudes.”

Defensively, the Wildcats also played well in their limited opportunities as Carson Buffington had her third shutout of the season, while seniors Kaitlyn Lewer, Camdyn Clark and sophomore Madison Quinn didn’t let much through in the back.



Senior defender Kaitlyn Lewer sends the ball up the field Wednesday against Tonganoxie.

Louisburg will have back-to-back games again next week when it travels to Kansas City Christian on Tuesday and then will go to Frontier League power Spring Hill on Wednesday.

“The girls are doing a good job,” Conley said. “Getting three wins early is a good thing, but we just have to keep progressing. Next week is going to be tough. Kansas City

Christian is really good and Spring Hill is really, really good. We are going to have our work cut out for us and we are going to have to do that playing back-to-back games.

"We just have to be ready to go. KCC plays a tough schedule and Spring Hill has a bunch of studs on their team. We will see what we are made of. The girls have done a good job so far and we have executed the way we are supposed to. I think we can be a pretty tough team to play."

LOUISBURG SHUTS OUT BONNER SPRINGS

Louisburg hit the road for the first time Tuesday when the Wildcats traveled to Bonner Springs and the time away from home didn't seem to bother them.

The Wildcats got three goals from junior Mackenzie Scholtz as Louisburg pulled away for a 3-0 victory.

"The girls played their butts off," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said.

"Bonner came out with a massive amount of energy and played very hard. We struggled for the first 15 minutes or so. We might have been a little sluggish with a week off since our first game. We knew we needed to match their intensity and I think we did a good job of doing so."

Scholtz didn't have much of a problem finding the back of the

net as she added a hat trick and she also got some help with that as sophomore Olivia Barber assisted on two of those goals.

Defensively, the Wildcats also shined as Bonner Springs had few chances on goal and Louisburg was able to control the possession.

“We changed our formations at halftime that really limited their attack and allowed us to press them more and force more turnovers,” Conley said. “Yeah the girls played their hearts out and all played very hard. I was extremely happy we handled the changes throughout the game. Our back line played very, very well. I’m very pleased with the way this team is progressing so far.”

Wildcats blank Harmon to win season opener



Junior Trinity Moore beats a Harmon player to a 50-50 ball Thursday during the Wildcats’ season opener in Louisburg. The Wildcats defeated Harmon, 5-0.

It may be a new season for the Louisburg girls soccer team, but they looked like the same Wildcats that found

their way to the state title game a year ago.

Even with a few different pieces, Louisburg was able to jump on Harmon from the start during Thursday's season opener and the Wildcats came away with 5-0 shutout on their home pitch.

It was the start of a long journey for Louisburg, but the Wildcats took a step forward – albeit a small one – in starting off their season with a win.

"It was good," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We played a lot of kids in a lot of different spots and they came and played hard. I think we dominated the game and Harmon might have had one shot, if that. The kids did what we asked them to do, but we still have plenty to work on this week in practice."

The Wildcats (1-0) were able to get off to a good start thanks to the feet of junior Mackenzie Scholtz. The Louisburg forward recorded a hat trick in her first time out and those three goals helped ease what nerves there were to begin the match.

Scholtz scored two of those goals in the first 11 minutes of action to help give the Wildcats the momentum they were looking for. With three minutes left in the first half, Scholtz completed the hat trick as she converted a penalty kick to put Louisburg up 3-0 at halftime.

"She did a good job," Conley said of Scholtz. "She was moving a little bit and we have put her in more of a leadership role to do a little bit more talking and coaching out there. Mackenzie knows, and has been in the program long enough, that

she knows the expectations and she can help relate that to the younger players. I think it was a good first game for her.”



Junior Avery O'Meara sends the ball up the field Thursday against Harmon.

Louisburg continued putting pressure on Harmon in the second half and were awarded another penalty kick when freshman midfielder Reese Johnson was tripped up in the box. Johnson took the kick and found the back of the net for her first varsity goal to put the Wildcats up 4-0.

The Wildcats sealed the win late in the second half when junior Trinity Moore hit a shot from just outside of the box and it curled into the net for the final goal.

As well as the offense played at times, the Wildcat defense also played well in its limited chances. The back line of Camdyn Clark, Kaitlyn Lewer and Madison Quinn didn't let many

balls get through and goalie Carson Buffington protected the net for the shutout.



Defender Madison Quinn controls the ball Thursday in the Wildcats' win over Harmon.

The Louisburg midfield controlled possession, in what was a physical game between the two teams, and were able to get several good looks at the goal. The big lead also allowed several players to see the field and get some experience on the varsity level.

"The best part is that this game allowed them to figure out what they are supposed to do and where they are supposed to be," Conley said. "That helped quite a bit. I think we actually played better later in the game, but we just scored goals quick and were able to get out to a lead. We struggled at first to figure out where our runs are

supposed to be, but then we settled down and did what we were supposed to do.

“It was good to get all the kids some minutes and get them some time on the varsity level and get their feet wet. It was a good first game and I think the girls learned some things, but we have a lot of work to do still.”

Louisburg will try to make it two wins in a row Tuesday when it travels to Bonner Springs for its first road match of the season. Varsity is set to begin at 6 p.m. The Wildcats will return home Thursday for a matchup with Tonganoxie.

Louisburg girls soccer has high aspirations after state runner-up finish



Louisburg junior Mackenzie Scholtz led the Wildcat girls soccer team in scoring last season with 32 goals and hopes to do the same this year. Scholtz and the Wildcats open their season Tuesday at home against Harmon.

Entering its fourth year of existence, the Louisburg girls soccer team has already set a high bar for itself.

The Wildcats advanced to the state semifinals in back-to-back seasons, and they made it to the championship match last year against Bishop Miege and finished as a state runner-up. Despite all that success, there are a couple things Louisburg has yet to accomplish.

Other than a state championship, the Wildcats have yet to garner that allusive Frontier League title and that is their first of many aspirations as they enter the 2019 season.

“We have our team goals, but this year we want to focus on competing for a league title,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We were close in the past, but unfortunately not close enough. We play in one of the best 4A soccer leagues in Kansas and it is always a tough test each and every night. We have our work cut out for us, but this team is capable of being special as long as they continue to play for each other.”

Louisburg has a good opportunity to do that, even though the Frontier League has added three new schools to its slate. The Wildcats return a bulk of their players from their state team a year ago as they try to make a run at a league crown.

The team may feature a little different look, however, as it will have to replace the program’s all-time leading scorer in Bailey Belcher. Belcher was a big part of the Wildcats’ success as she controlled the middle of the field and drew a lot of attention from opposing defenses.

“Losing Bailey is going to leave some big shoes to fill,” Conley said. “In our existence as a program, she is the most decorated player we have ever had. We understand what she

meant to this team and program, but we have some girls ready to step up and play their game. It will be fun to watch this team grow and mature. I think this team could potentially be more dangerous offensively than we were last year."

A big reason for that optimism is forward Mackenzie Scholtz. The Louisburg junior had a big season up top for the Wildcats as she led the team with 32 goals on the year and had 15 assists in 21 games. She was also a first team all-league and all-state player and Conley believes she is poised to have another big season.

"Mac has had a fantastic first two years in our program," Conley said. "She has set the bar incredibly high for herself. I think this year, she will truly show what kind of player she is. She has worked hard to get stronger in the off-season and it has shown with her play throughout our preseason. She will be able to show everyone what type of player she truly is and I think she is ready for that challenge."

As dangerous as the Wildcats appear to be up top, they are pretty balanced across the pitch, including with their back line.



Senior Kaitlyn Lewer is one of two returning all-league players to lead the Louisburg defense.

Seniors Kaitlyn Lewer and Camdyn Clark return to anchor the Louisburg defense as both players earned all-league honors a year ago and Lewer was a second-team all-state player. Junior Skylar Bowman, senior Julianne Finley and sophomore Madison Quinn also figure to see time in the back.

Junior Hannah Straub, who started last season, will have to miss time due to injury to start the season, but Conley hopes to have her back later in the year.

In the midfield, junior Erin Lemke will help lead that spot as she was second team all-state and all-league selection a season ago. Lemke had 12 goals last season and five assists and is one of the team's top returning scorers.

Seniors Leia Shaffer and Hallie Hutsell, juniors Trinity Moore, Haley Cain, Avery O'Meara, Morgan

Messer and sophomore

Olivia Barber also figure to see a lot of time in the midfield as several

players started or saw a lot of varsity action in 2018. Moore, who was an

all-league player on defense last year, will see more action in the middle.



Junior Erin Lemke, who scored 12 goals for Louisburg last season, will look to help lead the midfield this year.

“This group of girls are returning a lot of senior and junior experience, with some talented underclassmen sprinkled in,”

Conley said. “With all the injuries we faced last year, a lot of players got an opportunity to get their feet wet. This year, they will get their shot. A lot of these girls have been

starting since they joined our program. It is important we show what type of team we are and let these girls create their own impact on our program.

"I think our midfield will be pretty solid as well as our experienced defense. It will be interesting to see when it's all said and down which group stands out the best. If these groups push each other like I know they can at practice this group is going to be a lot of fun to watch."

The Wildcats will have a new look in goal this year as senior Carson Buffington takes over for a three-year starter in Shay Whiting. Buffington did see some varsity time last season and Conley is excited to see what his new goalie can do on a full-time basis.

"Carson will have some big shoes to fill this season, but I think she is more than capable," he said. "She got some starts last year and showed what we can expect from her. She has grown so much since playing soccer for the first time as a sophomore. Her work ethic is second to none. We have high expectations for her this season, because of those factors."

Louisburg will begin the 2019 season Tuesday when it hosts Harmon for a 6 p.m. matchup. That is when the Wildcats begin their journey to what they hope is another state semifinal berth, but they also realize it gets more and more difficult every year.

"I think whenever you have such a historic run like that girls

have the past two years you need to appreciate it and reflect on it, but this is a new season," Conley said. "No one is going to fear us, and everyone is going to be prepared for us. For a lot of the schools we play, we will be their biggest game. The girls need to be prepared for everyone's best shot day in and day out.

"We have talked a lot about living in the moment and making the most of our opportunities. This group of girls have a great opportunity to do something special, but it's on them. They need to be mentally ready for a long season and prepared to deal with any adversity that might be thrown at them."

Top 10 Stories of 2018



It was a successful, and eventful, 2018 for Louisburg High School athletics and for those who are connected to the Wildcat program. This past year created a lot of school history for LHS and several programs brought back state hardware to Louisburg.

Below are the Top 10 stories from 2018, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the explanation is the link to the actual story from the event.

This year was a blast to cover and I was blessed to have the opportunity to go along for the ride with many of these. As much fun as it was, I can't wait for 2019 to begin. Looking forward to it!



10. Dillon medals at state golf for second straight year

EMPORIA – All season, Calvin Dillon had been atop or near the front of leaderboard and that didn't change in what was his biggest tournament of the season.

The Louisburg High School sophomore went up against the state's best during the Class 4A state golf tournament on May 19 at the Emporia Municipal Course and did more than old his own. Dillon earned a state medal as he finished 11th overall

with a 3-over par 74.

It was the second consecutive state medal for Dillon after he finished 10th overall last season at Wamego as a freshman.

“It is a real honor to earn another state medal, especially with the quality players that were at the state tournament,” Dillon said. “There were lots of good players and lots of good teams.”

It was another notch on Dillon’s list of accomplishments that included a Frontier League title and six straight tournament victories during the 2018 season.



Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein



Louisburg girls soccer coach Kyle Conley

9. Conley, Ebenstein named Class 4A Coach of the Year

Louisburg girls soccer coach Kyle Conley and Wildcat football coach Robert Ebenstein both led their respective teams to special seasons.

Those seasons were special enough for both coaches to earn two big awards.

Conley was rewarded for all his hard work in June when it was announced that he was named as the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association's Girls Coach of the Year for Class 4-1A.

He guided the Wildcats to a 14-7 record and a spot in the state championship match, where the Lady Cats finished second

overall. The finish was something to remember for Wildcat fans as that was accomplished in just the program's third year of existence.

He has posted a 41-18-2 record during his time as the Wildcat girls head coach and also guided the Louisburg boys soccer team to its best finish in program history in 2017 with a fourth place finish at state.

As for Ebenstein, he guided the Wildcats to 10 straight victories and a regional championship to start the 2018 season, before getting knocked out in the sectional round against eventual state champion, Bishop Miege.

Following the season, the Kansas Football Coaches Association named Ebenstein as the Class 4A Coach of the Year. Ebenstein, who is just in his second season as head coach, has a 16-4 record with the Wildcats as he guided his team to a Frontier League championship this year.



8.

Holtzen finishes Louisburg career with 12 varsity letters

Once Isabelle Holtzen received her diploma and walked out of Louisburg High School for the last time as a student, she officially became one of the most decorated female athletes in school history.

No, she doesn't have any individual state championships, or even one as part of a team. Holtzen's decorations aren't ones in the form of trophies or all-state honors, but instead, they can be found on the front of

her letter jacket.

Holtzen became the first female athlete in at least 20 years to earn 12 varsity letters, which means she lettered on the varsity level in three sports in each of her four years of high school.

In research done by Louisburg Sports Zone, it was unable to find the last athlete to accomplish the feat, which could mean Holtzen could be the first Lady Cat to do so. She competed in cross country, basketball and track and field

The last athlete to come close was in 2001 when Krystal Bowes earned 10 varsity letters before moving on to a collegiate track career at Wichita State.

“The biggest thing that it means to me is to just have an opportunity to participate in three sports at a school like Louisburg,” Holtzen said. “The bigger the school that you go to, the harder it is to play multiple sports at the varsity level and I think Louisburg is unique in that fact. The best part of this whole journey was I think my freshman year because there was no pressure and no one was expecting anything from me. It was surprising and exciting to be able to letter in all three sports.”

Holtzen is currently at Northern Iowa, where she received a scholarship to pole vault for the Panther Track and Field Team.



7.

Dixon earns All-American, Player of the Year honors, signs with Kansas State

Louisburg

senior Anna Dixon led the Lady Cat volleyball program all season and she was recognized for her play on the court.

Dixon was named to the Under Armour Volleyball All-American team as she received a spot on the honorable mention squad when the list was released in November.

Dixon, the 6-foot-3 outside hitter, was recently named the Class 4A Player of the Year by the Kansas Volleyball Association, and along with that was also selected to the all-state first team.

It was the second year in a row Dixon was named player of the year, as she had to share the honor last season with Rose Hill's Gracie Van

Driel.

The honors certainly didn't stop there as Dixon was all named to the All-Frontier League first team as she helped guide the Lady Cats to an undefeated league season.

Dixon led the Lady Cats in kills with 584 in 105 sets played. She also finished with 325 digs, as she played all six rotations and also had 50 aces and 42 blocks.

In her four years with the program, Dixon finished with 2,003 kills, which would place that total among the best the school has ever seen.

All that success resulted in a dream come true for Dixon as she made it official last November when she signed to play volleyball at Kansas State.

"I have always known Kansas State was going to be my home," Dixon said. "Even since I committed as a sophomore, I always wanted to go up to Manhattan and see the girls and spend time with the team. K-State is where I need to be."



6. Louisburg wrestling sends six to state, Holtzen earns first state medal

SALINA – As the final whistle sounded in his blood round match, Cade Holtzen looked up into the rafters of the Tony’s Pizza Events Center and smiled.

He had finally reached his goal.

Holtzen defeated Columbus’ Gabe Porter by a 6-0 decision Saturday during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships in Salina and secured his state medal.

“It is one of the best feelings that I have had in my life,” Holtzen said. “Just knowing that I’m going to place – you just can’t match that with anything else.”

It certainly wasn’t

easy for the Louisburg freshman as he faced a win or go home with nothing scenario heading into his match with Porter. Holtzen pulled out the victory and eventually finished sixth overall at 113 pounds to give Louisburg a state medalist for the third consecutive season.

"It is pretty cool," he said. "I have been working for this all season, so to get a state medal is great. It may not have been as high as I wanted, but any state medal is pretty amazing."

Holtzen had a special year for the Wildcats as he finished with a 45-6 record and broke the school record for most wins in a single season. He won four different tournaments and was a Frontier League and regional tournament runner-up.

To add to his resume, he became only the second freshman in school history to earn state medal – second to only Austin Hood, who would go on to win three state titles.

Austin Moore finished one victory shy of earning his first state medal, while Ryan Adams, Thad Hendrix and Blue Caplinger also picked up wins at the state tournament.



5. Moore, Johnson finished in top 10 at state cross country, girls qualify for second straight year

WAMEGO – It was going to be hard for the Louisburg High School girls cross country team to duplicate its magical season of 2017.

Not only did the Lady Cats qualify their team for state for the first time in program history, but they also had a top five finisher in Trinity Moore.

Fast forward to 2018, Louisburg wasn't able to match that successful run – the Lady Cats took it a step further.

Moore, along with freshman Reese Johnson, each had a top 10 finish during the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships at Wamego Country Club, and it is the first time

in school history that two female runners had medaled at a state meet. Louisburg added on to that as the girls finished fifth in the team standings with 154 points, which is also the highest finish in school history.

Moore, who finished fifth at state a year ago, bested her performance by one place as she took fourth with one of her better performances of the season. Johnson was right behind her as she crossed the finish line in sixth.

Shaylor Whitham, Carlee Gassman, Kaitlyn Lewer, Delaney Wright and Kennady Wilkerson were also members of the Lady Cats' team to run at state. Emily Williams was a member of the regional team that finished second overall.



4. Louisburg track earns six state medals, Gassman state runner-up in

300 hurdles

WICHITA – Carlee Gassman had broken the Louisburg High School 300-meter hurdle record three different times in 2018 prior to the state track meet.

She picked the perfect time to make it a fourth.

Gassman broke her own school record in the 300 hurdles in May at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships in Wichita as she ran a time of 45.68 seconds to earn a silver medal as she was the Wildcats' top performer on the weekend. Andale's Abby Smarsh, who is a senior, won the event in 44.73.

It was the Louisburg sophomore's first time competing at the Kansas meet as she transferred in from Iowa last year, where she qualified for the state meet there in the 400 hurdles.

Gassman's medal in the 300 hurdles was just one of six the Wildcats were able to bring home following the two-day meet. Those six medals were the most Louisburg has earned since 2011, when the Wildcats combined to medal in 10 events and the boys won their first team state title.

The 300 hurdles wasn't the only event Gassman found success in as she also medaled in the long jump. Gassman, who hadn't competed in the event prior to this year, finished fifth with a mark of 17 feet, 0.25 inches.

Isabelle Holtzen would go on to finish sixth in the pole vault, the boys 4×400 team of Chris Williams, Blue Caplinger, Ben Wiedenmann and Justin Collins went on to take seventh. Williams finished eighth in the 400-meter run and

Trent Martin medaled
eighth in the boys pole vault.



3. Louisburg volleyball takes runner-up at state for second straight season

HUTCHINSON – The
feeling was much of the same.

The pride of finishing as a state-runner up was a popular one among the members of the Louisburg volleyball team. At the same time, the frustration of taking second in state in back-to-back seasons was just as prevalent.

Louisburg wasn't quite sure what to feel following its 25-13 and 25-14 loss to Bishop Miege in the championship game of the Class 4A state tournament Saturday at Hutchinson Sports Arena.

In 2017, the Lady
Cats fell to Rose Hill by two points in the championship

match, and fast

forward to the present, they were in the same spot – holding the state

runner-up trophy. It was the 15th time in program history that Louisburg finished in the top four at state.

The Lady Cats rattled off four straight wins to start the tournament, including knocking off No. 1 seed Independence, and defending state champions Rose Hill and Topeka Hayden. Louisburg then battled back to defeat Andale in the state semifinals.

“The loss was tough,”

Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “To come so close to a state title two

years in a row, only to come up short is tough. But with that being said, it is

a huge accomplishment for this team to get back to the state championship and

make it two years in a row. Finishing second is nothing to hang our heads on.

Last year’s finish fueled the fire for the team this year, and I challenged the

returning players to use this loss and feeling to fuel them for next year.”

Louisburg has been

one of the more dominant teams in Class 4A in the last decade as the Lady Cats

have made the state tournament seven out of the last nine years and have

finished as a state runner-up on three different occasions, along with several

third and fourth place finishes. They finished 2018 with a 36-9 record.



2. Louisburg girls soccer advances to title game, has best finish in program history

NORTH NEWTON – The obstacle seemed insurmountable – and it was.

The Louisburg High School girls soccer team found itself in the Class 4-1A state championship match in the program's third year of existence, but if they wanted to take it another step further, the Wildcats were going to have to knock the defending state champion of its perch.

Unfortunately, Bishop Miege wasn't about to be moved.

In a state title game that was played in the sweltering heat in late May at Bethel College, the Wildcats couldn't stay with the Stags in a 5-0 defeat. It was the third consecutive title for Bishop Miege, while Louisburg earned a state plaque for the first time in its short history.

It was special season for the Wildcats as the night before they knocked off Topeka Hayden, 1-0, in the state semifinals to secure the program's first state plaque. In 2017, Louisburg

both games in its state tournament appearance and finished fourth.

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 was in 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," Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher said after the Hayden win. "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."

"It is a third-year program with 41 wins, three regional championships, two state final fours and now a state runner-up," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said after the title game. "We just have kids who come in and work their butt off. They are not soft, they aren't weak and from top to bottom they are going to work hard."

"We worked hard, but we just played Miego. That is one of the best teams in the state, and that stinks, but our kids played hard, worked

their tail off and it was a great year. We had people criticize us for how we got there, but we won games and that really motivated the kids. It got them fired up to go do something bigger than themselves. I couldn't be more proud of they stuck together and what they accomplished."



1. Football wins 10 straight, takes Frontier League title and regional championship

It had been almost two months since Louisburg and Piper squared off on the football field in what was one of the more entertaining games on the Wildcats' schedule.

Back in early September, Louisburg left Piper High School with a seven-point win – a victory that would help propel them to a Frontier League championship and a perfect regular season.

The two teams squared off again and the stakes were a bit higher. The game, at least for Louisburg anyway, was even more exciting.

The Wildcats dominated action from the opening kickoff and never looked back in a 48-0 win over the Pirates. In the process, Louisburg won the school's first regional championship since 2016 and are off to a 10-0 start for the first time since 2010.

Louisburg advanced to the sectional round where it fell to eventual state champion Bishop Miege, 55-21, and finished its season with a 10-1 record.

It was as season marked with special moments, including a 28-7 victory over then-undefeated Paola late in the year to secure a league title.

"Being 10-0 and then having that first loss of the season was very disappointing," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "Losing always sucks, but losing in the playoffs and having to wait until next August is the worst. At the end of the day, Miege is a very good team and we did some good things. We got them to fourth down on multiple drives in the first quarter, we just couldn't make the plays on those big downs. Then we got behind a little and started pressing.

"Overall it was a great year. I am very proud of our guys and excited for them that they were able to get double digit wins for only the third time since 2000, and

there was a
lot of really good football played during that time period. It
was a lot
fun to be a part of.”



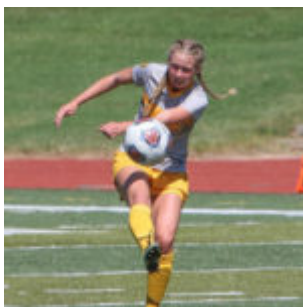
Austin Moore was named to the Kansas Shrine Bowl and was a first-team all-state player for the Wildcats. Moore was also named as the Kansas Small-Class Player of the Year by 810 Varsity.

With all that success, honors
started to roll in for its players as running backs Austin
Moore and Blue
Caplinger, along with linemen Brayden White and Kiefer Tucker
all earned
all-state honors.

Moore and White went on to be
semifinalists for the Simone Awards and Moore was also
selected to participate
in the Kansas Shrine Bowl in the summer of 2019. Ebenstein was
also named as
coach of the year by the football coaches association.

Most recently, Moore was named the Kansas Small-Class Player of the Year and Running Back of the Year by 810varsity.com, while White was named the Small-Class Lineman of the Year. Ebenstein was also named Kansas Small-Class Coach of the Year by 810 Varsity.

Belcher earns All-MIAA honors for Missouri Southern



Missouri Southern freshman, and Louisburg graduate, Bailey Belcher had a big season for the Lions as she led the team in five statistical categories. For that, Belcher was recognized on the All-MIAA honorable mention team.

JOPLIN, Mo. – In her three seasons with the Louisburg High School girls soccer team, Bailey Belcher could score some goals.

She scored a lot of them on her way to a program record 90 goals for her career as a midfielder. Belcher hasn't slowed down much as she has taken on a new challenge in college.

Belcher, who is a freshman for the Missouri Southern women's

soccer program, was named to the All-MIAA honorable mention team as a forward as she helped the Lions to a 7-8-3 record in a difficult MIAA schedule.

"I was extremely surprised and I wasn't expecting any type of honors, especially because it is my freshman year," Belcher said. "Still, it is really exciting."

The 2018 Louisburg graduate moved from her midfield spot in high school to the forward position for Missouri Southern. Belcher took the new role head on as she led the Lions in points (13), goals (6), shots (43), shots on goal (24) and game-winners (3).

Belcher also finished in the top 10 in three MIAA categories to wrap up what was a successful season. As rewarding as it was, it took Belcher a little time to get adjusted to the college game.

"I feel like my season went really well, especially coming in as a freshman where I wasn't expecting very much playing time at all," Belcher said. "But my constant hard work helped get me time on the field. My transition was a little difficult at first, just because I went from play in the middle to up top. Not being able to drop down very much, and making certain runs was an adjustment, but I caught on pretty quick."

Belcher was a key cog for the Lady Cat soccer team in her three years with the program, including the team's state runner-up finish last season. Along with her 90 goals, she also finished with 30 assists, 210 points, 21 game-winning shots, 16 hat tricks and 278 shots on goal.

She earned first-team All-Frontier League and all-state honors all three years. Belcher was also named to the United Soccer Coaches 2018 All Central Region Team.

Hinkle ready to take on role as LHS activities director



Walking into Scott Hinkle's office, it doesn't appear he started a new job two weeks ago.

The moving boxes are mostly gone. His desk is organized with everything in its place, along with a calendar crammed full of upcoming events.

Hinkle is not shy to tell people about his love for the Boston Red Sox. Sitting on one wall are two older chairs from Fenway Park, along other memorabilia.

The one thing that Hinkle hasn't caught up on is his efforts to get some purple gear. An avid Kansas Jayhawk fan, he hasn't had need to purchase any purple flair in the past. Seems like that will change shortly as he was hired as the new activities director and assistant principal at Louisburg High School earlier this summer.

"I have been a Jayhawk fan all my life," Hinkle said. "It will be a little weird to wear purple that is for sure, but I am sure I will get used to it. Before I left my old job, people found out where I was going so they started giving me little gifts with purple on it, like markers and stuff like that. They definitely got a kick out of that."

Hinkle takes over for Jeremy Holloway, who was promoted to principal at LHS and becomes the third activities director in as many years to take over that spot.

"My wife has family in Kansas City and I have family in Wichita and so we were looking to come this way," Hinkle said. "I had a couple friends that told me that the Louisburg position had opened up. I had heard of Louisburg a long time ago. I actually coached at Ottawa University in the early 90s and was familiar with the area. I came up, interviewed and here I am. It has obviously worked out well.

"Everyone has been so helpful and friendly and it is a good time to be coming to Louisburg. I am excited to be here."

Before taking the job in Louisburg, Hinkle had spent the last 22 years in the Liberal school district in a variety of roles. He served as the boys high school basketball coach, along with nine years as an activities director, a year as the head girls basketball coach at the local community college and last year he served as assistant principal at the high school.

Hinkle graduated from Valley Center High School, and went on from there to earn his bachelor's degree from Friends University, where he played basketball, and his master's from the University of Kansas.

Basketball has always been a passion for Hinkle, but during his time as activities director at Liberal, he had a chance to learn the life of other sports as well.

"Liberal changed a lot from when I first got there in the mid 90s when they were a football and track powerhouse," Hinkle said. "There were just athletes galore, but the culture kind of changed. We were really good in soccer and decent in track and volleyball. We still had good kids and good athletes, but it was a big transition as far as sports go when I first got there. My kids grew up there and being involved and being able to watch their events was something that has always appealed

to me.

"Basketball has always been in my blood. Other than my nine years as athletic director, I have coached in some capacity and I am a big basketball fan. Obviously, being an athletic director I am just a big sports fan in general."

Still new in town, Hinkle is still trying to get to know his coaching staff, but he is excited about the situation he is walking into with the Wildcats finishing as state runner-ups in volleyball and girls soccer last season. Several cross country, golf, wrestling and track athletes also earned state medals.

However, if there is one thing he wanted to relay to everyone is that he wants to give his coaches the freedom to run their programs.

"I want to let the coaches, coach," he said. "I am not going to be the guy that says this is how we did things in Liberal and I am not that type of leader. If it comes to the point where they need some advice, I want to be a resource for them. I don't want to be someone that is looking for something.

"I have met a few of the coaches. I have let them know that I am here if they need anything. I have stopped by the weight room to speak to a few coaches and some have stopped by to introduce themselves. I am still learning names and faces. We have a coaches meeting on the 10th and I will see and learn a lot more about them then."

With all the success the Wildcats had last season in the sports arena, Hinkle is happy to be a part of the LHS family and is learning new things about the town every day.

"I have heard all types of things," he said. "I have heard they take football pretty seriously here. I know they were state runner-up in volleyball and girls soccer last year and that is an exciting thing to walk into. I think expectations

are obviously high in those sports, but I think everyone always has high expectations. I am not going to do anything different than normal and I am just going to sit back and observe for a while and take it all in.”

Hinkle will experience some different things along with his new position. This season, the Frontier League will welcome three new teams – Bonner Springs, Piper and Tonganoxie – and will say goodbye to De Soto.

Another big change will be the postseason formats with several sports as the Kansas State High School Activities Association reshuffled their classification system, eliminating Class 4A-Division II.

“With the changes in the league, the classification system and being a new AD, it is probably a good time to be coming on,” Hinkle said. “The learning curve is going to be the same for all of us.

“I walked into a good situation for scheduling because (Holloway) already had everything all taken care of,” he said. “I think the dynamics of the league are going to change. Liberal’s former girls basketball coach is the coach at Piper and I know a little bit about them. As far as the programs and rivalries, that is something that is going to come with time.”

Even with all the changes in his life – moving, starting a new job, getting to know new faces – Hinkle is ready for what lies ahead and the staff at Louisburg has helped with that transition.

“It has been a whirlwind and it has been information overload,” he said. “It is a lot of the same things I did in Liberal as athletic director, I just haven’t done it for the last five years. Being an assistant principal at Liberal last year, I think, helped me prepare for the principal side.

“People have just gone out of their way to be helpful. From

the administration to the custodial staff to the secretaries, everyone has been super helpful. When I was out around town, people have welcomed me and it has been a friendly feel everywhere I have been.”

Wildcats get back to work after state runner-up finish



Senior goalie Carson Buffington goes through a drill with assistant coach Michael Pickman during the Wildcats’ week-long team camp that ended on June 15.

Two weeks after advancing to the state title game, and finishing its 2018 season with a state runner-up trophy, the Louisburg High School girls soccer team was back to work.

After a little time to relax and celebrate their accomplishments, the Wildcats came back focused for their team camp that started on June 11 in an effort to do what it takes to end their season with a win in 2019.

“It is quick, but ultimately their bodies need to shut down for a little bit,” Louisburg head coach Kyle Conley said. “We gave them about a week off, but the last couple of years we started the first day that we could. I think their heads are

right though. Last season, we got a little bit unfocused, weren't as dedicated as we could be and that was frustrating. We are starting from the top down and refocusing our dedication and why we are here."

Focus was a big emphasis for Conley in his week-long camp as he tried to get his team to reach even higher goals. Along with the camp, the players will have weight sessions throughout the summer in an effort to get in better shape.

Conley had 28 players out for camp, and even with some players out of town, he believes he has just the right numbers.

Going into next season, Conley sees anywhere from 8 to 10 new players joining the team and that is where summer workouts provided an added benefit.



Head coach Kyle Conley speaks to his team during the Wildcats' team camp earlier this month.

"This week really helps a lot with the new ladies that we have coming in to give them an idea of what to expect and what it is going to be like," Conley said. "That way when we get into the season, they will know what to do and we don't have to spend as much time teaching and can get more work done."

"It is a lot of the same fundamentals. We are going to institute some new stuff, but our girls are a creature of habit. They like doing things that they are comfortable with, at the same time we need to stretch them out of their comfort zone a little bit. The first three days were a lot of the same stuff we've done, but we did some new stuff and introduced some new formations. The main thing is we just want them to be focused and be prepared."

It is also a good possibility that the Wildcats will use different formations next season due to the departures of four seniors to graduation, including the program's all-time leading scorer in Bailey Belcher, and all-league players in Shay Whiting and Savannah Reinhart.

"It is going to take a lot of work to get back to where we want to be," Conley said. "We are going to have to replace a lot of offense with Bailey leaving, the stability that Savannah put up on the side, Shay in goal and Avery (Barber) providing depth in the back. We only lose four, but it is going to look quite a bit different. We are going to move some kids around and try them in new spots. We need to make it to where we are not so easy to scout. All these kids are coachable and hopefully we can fill those voids as best we can."



Junior Trinity Moore settles a ball during a drill while teammates Madison Quinn (left) and Ashley Moore look on.

Earning a spot in the state championship game gave the Wildcats a lot of confidence heading into the offseason, especially considering they did it in just the program's third year of existence.

Still, the Wildcats faced a lot of up and downs in 2018 and Conley hopes to eliminate the roller coaster ride for next season.

"I think it was the expectation for us when we were coming into last season was to play for a state championship," he said. "When we got fourth two seasons back, we had a lot of offense coming back and I thought on paper that our team should be better. I thought second place is where we deserved to finish, but that whole season was just a roller coaster. We weren't consistent and that is on me. That is what we are

talking about here is being mentally prepared, being a team leader and a good example.”

Conley named Class 4-1A Coach of the Year



Louisburg High School girls soccer coach Kyle Conley was recently named the Class 4-1A Coach of the Year by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association. Conley led the Wildcats to a state runner-up finish in May.

Kyle Conley has spent the last three seasons guiding the Louisburg High School girls soccer team and grooming the Wildcats to be able to compete against some of the best in the state.

It all came to fruition this year when Louisburg advanced to the Class 4-1A state championship match and went on to finish second overall. The finish was something to remember for Wildcat fans as all that was accomplished in just the program's third year of existence.

Conley was rewarded for all his hard work earlier this week when it was announced that he was named as the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association's Girls Coach of the Year for Class 4-1A.

"It was definitely a shock," Conley said. "It typically automatically goes to the state champion, but for whatever reason this year it did not. For me, it is, and always will be, about the kids. As long as they are progressing, improving and are challenged, I am doing my job. I am extremely humbled to receive this award."

Conley led the Wildcats to a spot in the state championship match after they defeated Topeka-Hayden, 1-0, in the state semifinals. Louisburg would go on to fall to Bishop Miege in the state championship match to finish its season with a 14-7 record.

It was the second consecutive season the Wildcats earned a spot in the state tournament. Louisburg finished fourth at state a year ago and have also captured regional titles in all three seasons under Conley.

He has posted a 41-18-2 record during his time as the Wildcat girls head coach and also guided the Louisburg boys soccer team to its best finish in program history in 2017 with a fourth place finish at state.

Although Conley is happy with the selection, he realizes he has had a lot of help along the way.

"It is a great honor and I am beyond excited to receive such an award," Conley said. "I couldn't have accomplished this if it wasn't for the kids and for all the help that (assistant) coach (Michael) Pickman has given me these last three years. He works a lot with the girls and he is a great asset to our program."

"There are a lot of worthy candidates that could have received this award, but I am very honored to have been chosen."