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 10^{th} 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

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 though 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."

Belcher, Scholtz lead Wildcats on all-league, all-state teams



Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher (4) and sophomore Mackenzie Scholtz (32) were each recently named to the all-Frontier League and all-state first teams. Both players were among the team leaders in goals and assists.

It was a season to remember for the Louisburg High School girls soccer team and the Frontier League coaches, and others from across the state, thought so as well.

Louisburg had five players earn all-state honors from the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association when it was released Sunday. Last week, seven Wildcats were selected to the All-Frontier League team after they finished their season with a 14-7 record and Class 4-1A state runner-up finish in just the program's third season.

"I felt with as good as our league was this past year we had a decent representation," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "Obviously, I would have liked a few more kids to be recognized, but I shouldn't complain. We went 5-5 in league and I think that getting two first team players is accurate.

Personally, I felt we could have had a few more players get second team honors. They girls were a little inconsistent this year and I think that is when some of the league schools saw us.

"Our state ballot was nice and well represented. I think the girls that received that honor were deserving. These young ladies were key contributors for team this past year. They are what we are looking for within our program to keep excelling. I am hoping this motivates others to strive to accomplish these goals. I am very proud of these young ladies.

Senior Bailey Belcher and sophomore Mackenzie Scholtz were each given high honors for their play this season. Belcher and Scholtz were named to the all-state first team and were also first-team All-Frontier League selections.

Belcher finished the season with 28 goals and 14 assists in 18 games, while Scholtz led the Wildcats with 32 goals and 15 assists in 21 games.

"Bailey and Mackenzie did a fantastic job for us this past season," Conley said. "They seemed to feed off of each other and excel at the right time. They made it very difficult for teams to defend us, because as soon as you took one player away, the other would take advantage of the available space. Both are extremely talented young ladies and the future is very bright for both of them."



Sophomore Erin Lemke finished her season with second team all-league and all-state honors.

Sophomore Erin Lemke and junior Kaitlyn Lewer each earned second team all-state recognition, while Lemke was named to the all-league second team and Lewer was an honorable mention.

Lemke finished the year with 12 goals and five assists from her midfield spot. Lewer played a vital spot on the Wildcat defense as she made the move from center to the outside spot.

"Erin has a fantastic work ethic," Conley said. "She works and continues to work nonstop. She does not give up on any plays and she is extremely coachable. She was frustrated in herself a little bit this year, but she came on at the end of the season, scoring and making plays for us. I think Erin receiving this honor is strictly because of her work ethic and her attitude to get better each and every day.

"Kaitlyn played nearly every minute of every game for us. She was a shutdown defender for us and played extremely hard for us. Her work ethic is second to none. She handled the move from center back to outside back extremely well and excelled at it."



(From left) Shay Whiting, Savannah Reinhart, Kailtyn Lewer and Trinity Moore each earned honorable mention all-league honors. Lewer was also a second team all-state selection and Whiting was named as an honorable mention all-state goalie.

Shay Whiting had a solid season in goal for the Wildcats and she was rewarded for her efforts. Whiting earned honorable mention all-state and all-league honors.

Whiting, a senior, started 18 games for the Wildcats and recorded 75 saves on the season to go along with six shutouts.

"Shay got banged up this summer and again against De Soto in the second game of the year," Conley said. "It took her several weeks to get back to her aggressive and tough self, but when she did she was fantastic, especially during the playoff run."

Senior Savannah Reinhart and sophomore Trinity Moore were also awarded honorable mention all-Frontier League honors for their play this season.

Reinhart finished the season with four goals and five assists

from the midfield spot in 21 games, which included nine starts.

Moore started all 21 games for the Wildcats and was a fixture for the Louisburg defense as she provided a lot of help from the sweeper position.

"Savannah worked hard to overcome her knee injury before the season," Conley said. "It slowed her down, but she changed her game and adapted to her situation by playing the ball quicker and reading the game to anticipate the next play.

"Trinity had an up and down year, but she played well overall. She had a fantastic middle of the season and was extremely aggressive. On free kicks, her service was extremely good as well. Unfortunately, we didn't finish very many of the chances she created with her service."

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE GIRLS SOCCER FIRST TEAM

Caitlin Countryman, junior, Baldwin

Josie Boyle, sophomore, Baldwin

Mackenzie Mohl, sophomore, De Soto

Jordan Zade, freshman, De Soto

Morgan Laplante, junior, De Soto

Bailey Belcher, senior, Louisburg

Mackenzie Scholtz, sophomore, Louisburg

Sara Watson, senior, Spring Hill

Mallory Smith, junior, Spring Hill

Anna Watson, senior, Spring Hill

GOALIE: Taylor Rogers, senior, De Soto

SECOND TEAM

Anna Burnett, sophomore, Baldwin
Caitlin Walton, senior, De Soto
Alexa Rosetta, senior, De Soto
Alex Schemmel, senior, De Soto
Kate Erpelding, freshman, Eudora
Alex Pascua, freshman, Eudora
Erin Lemke, sophomore, Louisburg
Amanda Wray, senior, Ottawa
Jasmine Diaz, senior, De Soto
Kaylen Dawson, sophomore, Spring Hill

GOALIE: Emery Mounce, sophomore, Spring Hill

HONORABLE MENTION

Lauren Russell, freshman, Baldwin
Samantha McKinney, senior, Baldwin
Ashley Panagakis, junior, De Soto
Krista Rush, junior, De Soto
Nicole Whitten, senior, Eudora

Kaitlyn Lewer, junior, Louisburg

Trinity Moore, sophomore, Louisburg

Savannah Reinhart, senior, Louisburg

Lexi Dillon, freshman, Spring Hill

GOALIE: **Shay Whiting, senior, Louisburg**; Britney Smith, senior, Ottawa

2018 Female Athlete of the Year Nominees



For the past two 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 highlight them a little bit. So this year, I wanted to take it a step further.

This 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 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 and then I will tabulate the results and determine the winner. In the next couple of weeks, I will announce this year recipient.

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

2018 LOUISBURG SPORTS ZONE FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



Bailey Belcher, Senior, Basketball and Girls
Soccer

Belcher led the Wildcat girls soccer team to a state runner-up finish this past season as she was among the leading scorers on the team with 28 goals and 14 assists, which included five hat tricks. She is a three-time all-Frontier League and all-state first teamer, and has been a team captain for the last two seasons.

She holds the Louisburg record for most goals in a season with 33 and in a career with 91. She is will continue her soccer career at Missouri Southern next season.

Belcher was also a starter on the Lady Cats' basketball team and earned honorable mention all-league honors after averaging eight points, four rebounds and two steals a game.



Carson Buffington — Junior — Volleyball, Basketball and Girls Soccer

Buffington helped the Louisburg volleyball team to a state runner-up performance in the Class 4A-Division I state tournament as the team's setter. She finished the season with more than 1,100 assists and had 30 aces. She also helped out defensively with 244 digs.

She earned second team all-Frontier League honors and was also placed on the Kansas Volleyball Association's (KVA) all-state second team. Buffington was also selected to the KVA all-state tournament team.

On the basketball court, Buffington earned second team all-Frontier League honors and led the league in rebounding for the third straight season. She averaged 11.6 rebounds a game to go along with 9.2 points and 2.7 steals from the forward spot.

Buffington also served as the back-up goalie for the Wildcat soccer team and saw action in several varsity games.



Anna Dixon - Junior - Volleyball

Dixon played a big role in the Lady Cats' state runner-up volleyball team this past season. As an all-around player, Dixon led Louisburg with 613 kills and 61 blocks on the season. She was also third on the team with 58 aces and 329 digs.

She earned first team all-Frontier League and all-state honors. Dixon was named as the Kansas Volleyball Association's Class 4A-D1 Co-Player of the Year and was selected to the KVA

all-state tournament team.

Dixon also earned Best of Kansas Preps selection by the Topeka Capital-Journal, which is a new award this season. She has committed to Kansas State University to play volleyball in the fall of 2019.



Carlee Gassman — Sophomore — Cross Country, Basketball, Track and Field

Gassman had a record-breaking season for the Louisburg track team. She broke a 29-year old school record in the 300-meter hurdles in early April and then broke her own school record several more times this season, including at the Class 4A state meet where she ran a time of 45.68 to finish second in the state.

It was her first of two state medals on the season as she also finished fifth in the state in the long jump with a mark of just more than 17 feet. She also won a regional title in the 300-meter hurdles.

Gassman was also a consistent runner on the Wildcat cross country team that qualified for the state meet for the first time in school history. She served as the No. 2 runner for most of the season.

On the basketball court, Gassman saw a lot of varsity time for the Lady Cats as well as one of the team's point guards.



Holtzen had a record-breaking season in the pole vault this past season for the Lady Cats' track and field team. She broke her own school in the event with a vault of 11 feet, 6 inches

and went on to finish sixth at the Class 4A state track meet with a clearance of 11-0.

She was also a league and regional runner-up, while also running on legs of the 4×100 and 4×400 -meter relay teams.

On the cross country team, Holtzen was a consistent runner on a varsity team that qualified for state for the first time in school history.

On the basketball court, Holtzen served as a team captain and was a full-time starter for the Lady Cats at the guard spot.

At the end of the school year, Holtzen became the first Lady Cat in several decades to earn 12 varsity athletic letters and did so while earning a 4.0 GPA, which is first in her class.



Sophie McMullen - Senior - Volleyball

McMullen was another key piece to the Lady Cats' success this past season on the volleyball court. She made the switch from setter to outside hitter and defensive player to help Louisburg to a state runner-up campaign.

She was first on the team with 114 aces to go along with 437 digs defensively. As an outside hitter, McMullen added 381 kills.

McMullen was selected to the all-Frontier League and all-state first team and was named to the Kansas Volleyball Association all-state tournament team. She was also selected to the Greater Kansas City Coaches Volleyball Association all-star team.

McMullen signed to play volleyball at Northwest Missouri State this coming fall.

All-Frontier League Baseball, Girls Soccer and Softball teams



ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE BASEBALL

FIRST TEAM

INFIELD: Darren Winans, senior, De Soto; Kurt Golubski,
senior, Paola; Chad Bones, junior, Ottawa; Kaleb Shaffer,
senior, Ottawa

OUTFIELD: Khalil Thrasher, senior, Eudora; Jackson Burrell, senior, Spring Hill; Nick Modes, senior, Paola

CATCHER: Chandler Bloomer, senior, Ottawa

PITCHER: Conner Mackay, senior, De Soto; Jared Parenti, senior, Ottawa

UTILITY: Anthony Slaughter, senior, De Soto

SECOND TEAM

INFIELD: Bryce Mohl, senior, De Soto; Cody Lucas, senior, Spring Hill; Nash Dreiling, senior, Paola; Chris Wilks, senior, Baldwin

OUTFIELD: Jack Barger, senior, De Soto; Peyton Garvin, senior, Eudora; Madden Rutherford, sophomore, Louisburg

CATCHER: Evan Peuser, sophomore, Paola

PITCHER: Tyler Barkemeyer, junior, De Soto; Jake Schrock, senior, Baldwin

UTILITY: Michael Daggett, sophomore, Paola

HONORABLE MENTION

INFIELD: Conner Mackay, senior, De Soto; Bryce Towles, senior, Spring Hill; Luke Angermayer, senior, Paola; Owen LaMar,

senior, Ottawa; Jake Schrock, senior, Baldwin; Garrett
Caldwell, senior, Louisburg

OUTFIELD: Connor Strouse, senior, De Soto; Zade Barker, sophomore, Spring Hill; Wyatt Johnston, senior, Paola; Garrett Owings, senior, Baldwin

CATCHER: Corbyn Meyers, sophomore, Spring Hill; Garrett Borth, senior, Baldwin

PITCHER: Jayden Pierce, junior, Eudora; Garret Trimmer, junior, Paola; Chance Crowley, senior, Ottawa

UTILITY: Cameron Reynolds, junior, Ottawa; Ty Bennett, junior, Baldwin; Garrett Harding, sophomore, Louisburg

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE GIRLS SOCCER FIRST TEAM

Caitlin Countryman, junior, Baldwin

Josie Boyle, sophomore, Baldwin

Mackenzie Mohl, sophomore, De Soto

Jordan Zade, freshman, De Soto

Morgan Laplante, junior, De Soto

Bailey Belcher, senior, Louisburg

Mackenzie Scholtz, sophomore, Louisburg

Sara Watson, senior, Spring Hill

Mallory Smith, junior, Spring Hill

Anna Watson, senior, Spring Hill

GOALIE: Taylor Rogers, senior, De Soto

SECOND TEAM

Anna Burnett, sophomore, Baldwin
Caitlin Walton, senior, De Soto
Alexa Rosetta, senior, De Soto
Alex Schemmel, senior, De Soto
Kate Erpelding, freshman, Eudora
Alex Pascua, freshman, Eudora
Erin Lemke, sophomore, Louisburg
Amanda Wray, senior, Ottawa
Jasmine Diaz, senior, De Soto
Kaylen Dawson, sophomore, Spring Hill

GOALIE: Emery Mounce, sophomore, Spring Hill

HONORABLE MENTION

Lauren Russell, freshman, Baldwin
Samantha McKinney, senior, Baldwin
Ashley Panagakis, junior, De Soto
Krista Rush, junior, De Soto
Nicole Whitten, senior, Eudora

Kaitlyn Lewer, junior, Louisburg

Trinity Moore, sophomore, Louisburg

Savannah Reinhart, senior, Louisburg

Lexi Dillon, freshman, Spring Hill

GOALIE: **Shay Whiting, senior, Louisburg**; Britney Smith, senior, Ottawa

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE SOFTBALL

FIRST TEAM

INFIELD: Kamryn Shaffer, senior, Ottawa; Molly Rison, junior,
Louisburg; Betsy Parmley, senior, Baldwin; Sierra Smith,
sophomore, Eudora

OUTFIELD: Sienna Hall, senior, Baldwin; Audrey Flowers, junior, Baldwin; Elizabeth Hays, senior, Spring Hill

CATCHER: Gaige Pinkerton, freshman, Spring Hill

PITCHER: Jordan Johnson, senior, Paola; Kyla Etter, junior, Eudora

UTILITY: Regan Smith, senior, Spring Hill

SECOND TEAM

INFIELD: Jenna DeVore, senior, Ottawa; Hannah Menefee, junior, Paola; Paige Cooper, sophomore, Spring Hill; Kennedy Doherty, senior, Eudora

OUTFIELD: Justine Kennington, junior, Ottawa; Aubrey Weatherbie, sophomore, Paola; Devin Pucell, senior, Eudora

CATCHER: Emma Grossoehme, freshman, Baldwin

PITCHER: Layney Steging, junior, Spring Hill

UTILITY: Hannah Pearce, senior, Paola

HONORABLE MENTION

INFIELD: Halle Schindler, junior, Paola; **Kayla Willey, sophomore, Louisburg**; Avery Karlin, freshman, De Soto; Kellee Wiggins, senior, Baldwin; Megan Kennedy, junior, Eudora

OUTFIELD: Alli Kerns, junior, Ottawa; Jordan Diehl, sophomore, De Soto; McKInley Markley, senior, Baldwin

CATCHER: Jocelyn Woods, senior, Ottawa; Josie Bedford, senior,

De Soto; Alaina Howe, senior, Eudora

UTILITY: Karson Griggs, junior, Louisburg

Bishop Miege halts Wildcats' shot at a state title



Louisburg senior Savannah Reinhart battles a Bishop Miege player for the ball during the Class 4-1A state championship match Saturday at Bethel College. The Wildcats fell to Miege, 5-0, and finished second overall.

 ${\sf NORTH\ NEWTON\ -\ The\ obstacle\ seemed\ insurmountable\ -\ and\ it\ was.}$

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 Saturday 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.

"Miege is a team full of club kids that play year-round and they literally have 22 club kids, and I have like six," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "Trying to explain and adjust things, it is hard to do when our soccer experience isn't what everyone else's is.

"That is what our work ethic does, being blue collar, is it keeps us in games like this and allows us to make it this far. We ran into a great Miege team. The kids held their heads high and they played hard and did things the right way. It stinks now, but for the next 30 years or so that plaque is going to be in that case and no one can ever take that from us. I'm just really proud of the kids."



Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher heads the ball away from Bishop Miege player Saturday in Newton.

It was an historic playoff run for the Wildcats as they put together their best finish in school history and cemented its legacy with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Topeka-Hayden on Friday in the state semifinals.

Louisburg was guaranteed a plaque after just missing out on one the year before after it took fourth overall. The Wildcats were thankful for their fourth place medals at the time, but they wanted something a little bigger.

"It is a third-year program with 41 wins, three regional championships, two state final fours and now a state runner-up," Conley said. "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 (Saturday), but we just played Miege. 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."

Bishop Miege (14-6-1) broke open a scoreless game in the 10^{th} minute when Sophia Stram scored to give Miege a 1-0 advantage and then doubled it in the 25^{th} minute with another goal from Stram.



Louisburg goalie Shay Whiting slides in for a save Saturday in the Class 4-1A championship match at Bethel College.

Miege scored off a corner kick with 13 minutes left in the first half and then found the back of the net with another shot in the box late in the first half and the Stags took a 4-0 halftime lead.

Louisburg (14-7) had just one good look at goal in the first half as sophomore Mackenzie Scholtz broke through the Stags defense for a one-on-one with the goalie, but the Stags keeper stopped the attempt.

As time ticked off in the second half, the four Louisburg seniors realized their time was coming to an end. Seniors Bailey Belcher, Savannah Reinhart, Shay Whiting and Avery Barber all played their final game as a Wildcat.

Belcher was one of the team's leading scorers from the midfield spot, while Whiting served as the team's starting goalkeeper the last three seasons. Reinhart was a part-time starter in the midfield and logged a lot of minutes, while Barber gave Louisburg good minutes in the back.

"They were an unbelieveable group," Conley said. "It is a good thing that we are only losing four kids, but we lose four really incredible kids. They have great personalities, great team leaders and they are players in key positions with great work ethic. They are fantastic kids who are always looking out for others. They were always putting the team before themselves and I couldn't be more proud of that group."



Members of the Louisburg girls state runner-up girls soccer team are (front row, from left) Hayli Detherage, Savannah Reinhart, Camdyn Clark, Shay Whiting, Bailey Belcher, Morgan Messer, Skylar Bowman, Olivia Barber, Leia Shaffer; (back row) head coach Kyle Conley, Avery Barber, Madison Quinn, Carson Buffington, Erin Lemke, Julianne Finley, Haley Cain, Trinity Moore, Mackenzie Scholtz, Hannah Straub, Hallie Hutsell, Kaitlyn Lewer, Avery O'Meara and assistant coach Michael Pickman.

The Wildcats had an up and down season that featured some tough losses, and one where they had to deal with key injuries throughout the season. Still, the team came together at the right time.

"Our team is really young," Conley said. "Hoping to see them make a jump from a freshman to playing like a junior or senior is unrealistic. At the same time, we also thought some things are going to get handed to us and be super easy. We had to work pretty hard and eventually figured out we need to go to another level. The girls realized that they are going to have to play stronger and harder and once the tournament started we got going pretty good. I'm really proud of them."

Louisburg girls soccer advances to championship match



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

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

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

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

"For a third-year program, making it to state two years in a

row and just the things these girls have done is amazing," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "I don't have a ton of club kids. I have kids that just bust their butt every day and that is just what we do. We play hard, grind, we don't give up and we just keep fighting and keep working. All the people that said we didn't deserve to be here, all teams that said we had an easy path to state and we didn't do anything — just look at us now."

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Scholtz's golden goal sends Wildcats to state semifinals



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

The match provided more drama than maybe some were expecting.

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

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

"The problem is when you play a team that you beat pretty handily earlier, it is hard to keep them focused and let them know that anything can happen," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "When they (Heritage) got that first goal, all of a sudden they had all the momentum and all the faith. We just could not find ourselves and they kept at us and we didn't finish balls that we have finished all year. Every ball went down the middle, but we just couldn't place it. It turned into an epic game with tons of pride."

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Senior Savannah Reinhart makes a pass Tuesday against Heritage Christian.

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

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

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

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

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

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

For a photo gallery from the state quarterfinal match, make sure to click here.

Photo gallery: Wildcats onto the state Final Four



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

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

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

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

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

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

















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

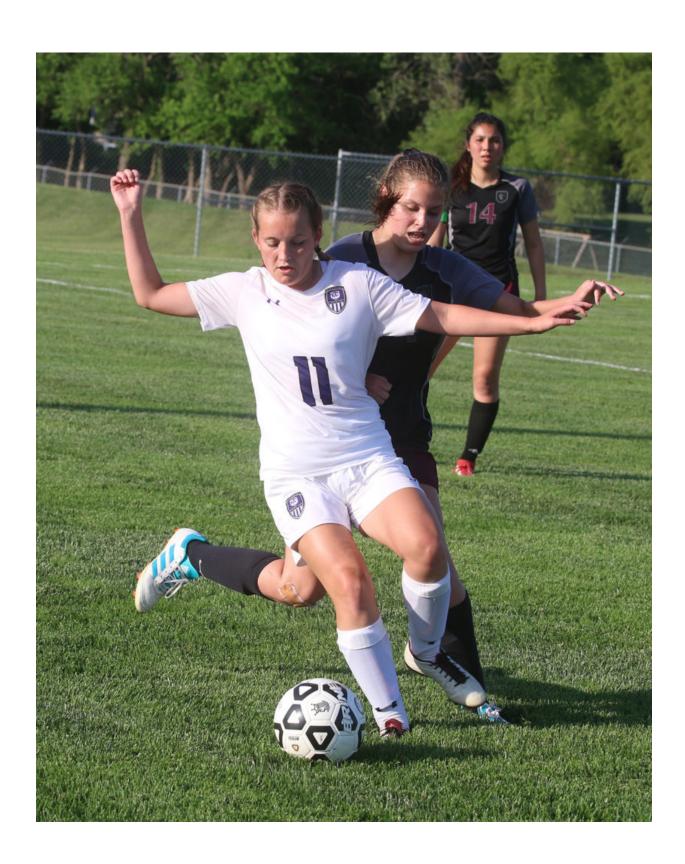






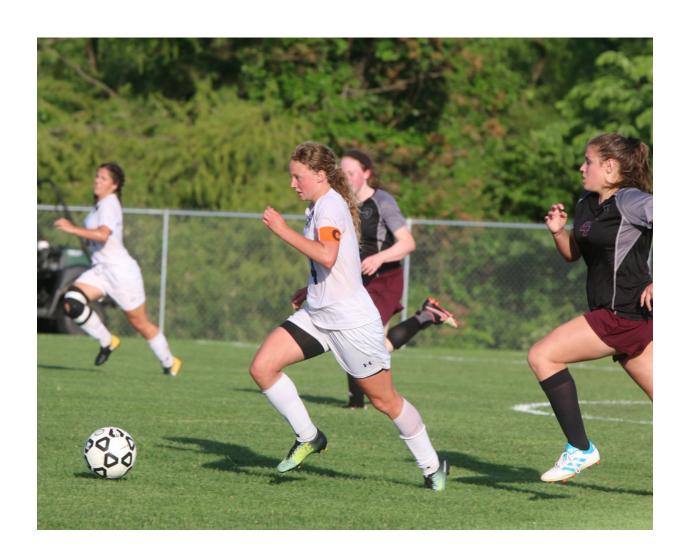








Senior Savannah Reinhart makes a pass Tuesday against Heritage Christian.

















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





















