

Wildcats take fourth at Class 4-1A state tournament



Louisburg sophomore Kaitlyn Lower heads the ball away from a Maize South player Saturday during the Class 4-1A third-place game at Friends University in Wichita. The Wildcats fell 8-0 and finished fourth in the state.

WICHITA – One by one, the Louisburg High School girls soccer players received their state medals and cemented the best finish in school history.

Despite all that, the Wildcats had hoped for more.

In its first Class 4-1A state tournament appearance, Louisburg ended its season with a pair of losses, including an 8-0 defeat to Maize South in the third-place game Saturday at Friends University in Wichita.

It was hard for the Wildcats to think of the positives in what was a rough, couple days. Still, there were plenty there for the second-year program.

“A second-year program getting fourth in the state is incredible,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “You can’t fathom that. Getting 13 and 14 wins in consecutive seasons is unbelievable and that almost matches the top teams in the state, no matter what class you are.

“I hope we can use this experience to move forward and

hopefully we will be good enough to make another run in the next couple of years so we can remember this and know what it is like and build on it.”

The Wildcats (13-7-1) opened the tournament with a 1-0 loss to Thomas More Prep on Friday before facing a Maize South team that fell to Bishop Miege in overtime. Miege went on to beat TMP 1-0 to win the Class 4-1A state championship.



Senior Bryn O'Meara races to beat a Maize South to a 50-50 ball Saturday in Wichita.

Maize South seem inspired from the get-go as it scored six goals in the first eight minutes to jump on the Wildcats. Louisburg junior Bailey Belcher and senior Bryn O'Meara each had a shot on goal, but Louisburg couldn't get much going against a strong Maize South defense.

Louisburg trailed 6-0 at halftime, but it made things a little more difficult in the second half for Maize South as it managed just two goals.

"The girls kept fighting," Conley said. "They got on us early and we kind of put our heads down and they put four in really quick. The girls recovered and got mentally strong. I think they held their own in the second half and it was good to hear the opposing coach yelling to tell his players to work. I just wish we could have started that way, but it is what it is. That is the best team in the state in my opinion."

The loss also meant the Wildcats had to say goodbye to seniors Lily Cook, Bryn O'Meara, Quincy Rice and Madisen Simpson, who played their final game with the program.

"Bryn, Madisen, Quincy and Lily – those four kids did a heck of a job," Conley said. "Whether it was their leading by example attitude, or their demeanor and how they carried themselves and set a great example for what we want this program to be looked upon. If you look at our crowd, we had more fans than anyone else, and that includes road games. That truly is a tribute to the girls on how hard they work and how much they mean to this town. The girls truly love it."

After coming up one loss short of the state tournament last season, the Wildcats took another step forward this year by making the state semifinals and getting that fourth-place finish.

It was a finish many in the program didn't expect with such a young group, especially early in the season on a team that started seven freshmen and sophomores.



Members of the Louisburg girls soccer team are (front row, from left) Bailey Belcher, Savannah Reinhart, Quincy Rice, Bryn O'Meara, Madisen Simpson, Skylar Bowman, Morgan Messer, Shay Whiting, Hallie Hutsell, Avery O'Meara, (back row) assistant coach Michael Pickman, Camdyn Clark, Leia Shaffer, Bria Jensen, Hayli Detherage, Trinity Moore, Mackenzie Scholtz, Kailtyn Lewer, Hannah Straub, Lily Cook, Erin Lemke and head coach Kyle Conley.

"When you make the final four, I think that exceeds your expectations. For us, our goal was to play for a regional championship and go from there. I think there were some games in the regular season that we gave away, but the best four teams in the state are here. We have to keep that in mind no matter how upset or frustrated we get. We literally just got fourth in state and that is incredible.

"It stinks to lose twice, and I will probably be pouting about it for a couple weeks, but when you look back at it, how can you ask for any more? This experience is something the kids are going to remember for the rest of their lives and I hope they truly understand how special it was."

Wildcats come up short of state championship game

In the Class 4-1A state semifinals against Thomas More Prep, Louisburg had its eyes set on a spot in the state championship game.

The Wildcats were just one score away from reaching their goal.

After a scoreless first half, TMP dashed the Wildcats' hopes as it got a goal from Kayla Vitztum five minutes into the second half and that was all the Monarchs needed in their 1-0 win Friday over Louisburg.



Louisburg junior Bailey Belcher heads the ball away from a TMP player Friday in the Class 4-1A state semifinal game.

"You could tell the girls were really nervous," Conley said. "They were nervous in the first 15-20 minutes in the semifinal game and then we got on our heels. We were just too anxious and were trying to do too much. We were not in our element and we were playing on turf, but that is not an excuse because we have to show up and play. When you start seven freshmen and

sophomores it is tough sometimes to be mentally strong.”

TMP had the ball on its side of the field most of the game, but when the Wildcats did have possession, the Monarchs made it difficult for them to get many shots on the goal with their defensive alignment as TMP had several players back protecting the goal.

The Wildcats did have one good chance in the finals minutes as Bailey Belcher had a good look at the goal, but her shot was saved by the TMP goalie.

“We struggled to adjust to pressure,” Conley said. “Against TMP, that was the ugliest formation you are ever going to see, but they do it effectively. That is a team that won eight straight games I think and had six shutouts during that time. They don’t give up many shots and they have a good goalkeeper. They just frustrated us tremendously and we couldn’t rebound from it.”

Lemke’s golden goal puts Wildcats in state semifinals



The Louisburg bench runs onto the field to mob Erin Lemke after she scored the game-winning goal in double overtime to

give the Wildcats a 2-1 win over Piper Tuesday in the Class 4-1A state quarterfinal game in Louisburg.

Louisburg freshman Erin Lemke loaded up for the most important shot of her short soccer career.

The Wildcat coaches kept preaching to Lemke, that if she got the opportunity, to strike the ball as hard as she could. So when her opportunity came in the second overtime of the Class 4-1A state quarterfinal game – Lemke did what she was told.

In fact, Lemke hit the ball so hard she ended up face first on the turf.

“I didn’t even know if it went in,” she said.

The crowd’s reaction told her everything that she needed to know.

Lemke’s shot found the back of the net and gave Louisburg a 2-1 victory over Piper in double overtime Tuesday in Louisburg. The goal put the Wildcats in the state tournament for the first time in their brief history as they are currently in just their second year.

“Going to state in only our second year is incredible,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “This a tribute to the young ladies in this program. All their hard work and dedication has paid off. I could not be more proud of these ladies and how much work they put into achieving such a fantastic feat. As I coach, I feel very fortunate to have such unbelievable kids to work with. I take great pride in being able to coach these young ladies.”



Erin Lemke is all smiles after she realized she scored the game-winning goal Tuesday against Piper.

Following Lemke's goal, the Wildcat bench emptied out onto the pitch to celebrate their historic victory – a hard-fought one at that.

Louisburg, which beat Piper 4-0 earlier in the season, got a much tougher match from the Pirates as both teams had chances to take control of the game.

After a scoreless first half, the Wildcats struck first when freshman Mackenzie Scholtz scored on an assist from junior Bailey Belcher with 32 minutes left in the second half and Louisburg had all the momentum.

About eight minutes later, it all changed.

Louisburg was called for a foul in the box and Piper was awarded a penalty kick. Piper's Emily Wilson snuck the ball

past Wildcat goalie Shay Whiting to tie the match.

Although Whiting missed the penalty kick, the Louisburg junior came up big in several situations for Wildcat defense. Whiting had five saves on the day.

She also got some help from her defense as Bryn O'Meara, Camdyn Clark, Kaitlyn Lewer and Hannah Straub all cleared the ball away at big moments or contested the Piper attack.

"I always have to be ready," Whiting said. "There was a never a moment where they weren't going to shoot because they can shoot from midfield so you have to be ready. The defense did a good job covering them so they didn't get many shots, but when there were, we had it covered."



Louisburg goalie Shay Whiting knocks away a Piper shot on goal Tuesday in the state quarterfinal game.

It appeared Louisburg had taken the lead a few minutes later as junior Savannah Reinhart put a shot into the back of the net off a rebound and the celebration began. It was short-lived though, as the Wildcats were called for off-sides and

the goal was disallowed.

"The girls did a good job of keeping a level head there and not getting down," Conley said. "They did a lot better job than I did, but we had tons of momentum and we didn't give up. I think fitness was a problem for (Piper) because they had a shorter bench than we did and I think eventually it paid dividends."

Piper had a direct kick opportunity just outside the box just before the end of regulation that would have given them the win, but the shot sailed just over the crossbar.

Belcher and Scholtz each had shots on goal in the first overtime that would have given Louisburg the win, but those shots were just wide of the net.

All that led up to Lemke's heroics halfway through the second overtime.

Scholtz played a through ball into the box as Lemke was cutting toward the middle. With a Piper defender on her back, Lemke ripped a shot past the Piper goalie and the rest was history.

The Wildcats made it to the state quarterfinals last season before falling to De Soto, but now they have taken the next step as they prepare to play in the state semifinals.

"It was a tough battle and we knew it would be," Whiting said. "Having that pressure of being better than last year was always there, but we pulled through and we got it and that is what we wanted. It was all about who wanted it more at the end and we pulled through."



Louisburg junior Bailey Belcher heads the ball away Tuesday against Piper.

Louisburg will now travel to Wichita on Friday for the Class 4-1A state soccer championships. The Wildcats (13-5-1) will meet Thomas More Prep (13-4-1) at 7 p.m. at Friends University.

If the Wildcats advance, they will play the winner of Maize South (17-1-1) and Bishop Miege (11-7-1) in the championship game at 2 p.m. on Saturday. If Louisburg loses, it will play in the third-place game at noon Saturday.

"The game is going to be on turf so we are going to see if we can find some turf fields to practice on this week so we can get ready for the speed of the game," Conley said. "It will be a faster game and now we are going to play some really good teams. We just have to get there, play one game at a time and see what happens."

Wildcats hope to make program history tonight



Louisburg senior Bryn O'Meara (left) and the rest of the Wildcats will host Piper at 5 p.m. today in the Northeast quarterfinal game. A win would put Louisburg in the state semifinals for the first time in its history.

The last time the Louisburg girls soccer team faced off with Piper was more than a month ago.

It wasn't much of a match as the Wildcats shutout the Pirates, 4-0, in a game that had to be settled over two days as it was postponed midway through due to the weather.

The Wildcats will welcome Piper back to Louisburg at 5 p.m., today when they host the Pirates in the Class 4-1A Northeast quarterfinals. Everyone on the Wildcat team is fully aware it won't be as easy this time around as they face the Kaw Valley League champion.

"When we played them the first time, they were missing a couple players and when they came back they were all here and was a much tighter game," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "Any given day, anything can happen. If we take an opponent lightly, then it will come back to get you and I think we saw

that with a couple teams at the beginning of the year. Hopefully we are ready to exert a lot of energy."

One more win and Lousiburg will find itself in the state semifinals for the first time in team history. Considering the Wildcats are just in their second year of existence, they are making bigger strides than many in the community thought possible and the players are ready to give back.

"I think it is really important because it shows our community that we have been putting in the effort," senior captain Bryn O'Meara said. "They raised a lot of money for us that we could become a program and now it is our turn to give back to them. We want them to come watch us so they can support us again. We want to win for us and for them."

The Wildcats (12-5-1) will have to contain a Piper team that currently has a 11-6 record and defeated Baldwin, 2-0, in its regional championship game.

"They have three really good kids in the middle," Conley said. "They will take it at you and they are physical. They have some kids that shoot from way outside and send a lofted chip ball in. For us, we have to stand them up and make them take contested shots. We just have to outwork them. They are a scrappy team and will keep working. We have to match that intensity and take it even further. They are the Kaw Valley champions and that is not an easy league to win. We will have our hands full."

On the other side, the Louisburg offensive attack has been playing well as it has scored 19 goals in its two regional games, including a 9-0 victory over Bonner Springs in the regional title game last week.

Freshman Mackenzie Scholtz and junior Bailey Belcher provide the Wildcats with a bulk of the scoring up front, but junior Savannah Reinhart, senior Quincy Rice and freshman Trinity Moore will also look to provide some scoring punch.

Defensively, the Wildcats have posted shutouts in three of their last four matches led by goalie Shay Whiting and defensive back line of O'Meara, Camdyn Clark, Hannah Straub and Kaitlyn Lewer. Midfielders Avery O'Meara, Madisen Simpson and Erin Lemke will also look to provide some protection in the middle.

"It is really exciting because we are a second-year program and we are getting a chance to go to state for a second year in a row," Simpson said. "Like coach said, a lot of teams don't get this chance to go this far or even to make it to the regional championship.

"Making it to state in just our second year would just show a lot of teams that we aren't just small-town Louisburg, but we can succeed in anything that we put our minds to."

Twice As Nice: Wildcats win second regional title



Louisburg senior Madisen Simpson (13) gets mobbed by teammates (from left) Bria Jensen, Morgan Messser, Mackenzie Scholtz, Skylar Bowman, Bailey Belcher and the rest of her Wildcat teammates following their 9-0 win over Bonner Springs Wednesday in the Class 4-1A regional championship game in Louisburg.

As 40-plus mph winds gusted over the Wildcat Sports Complex, the Louisburg High School girls soccer team blew right past Bonner Springs in its most important game of the season.

Louisburg took all the suspense out of the Class 4-1A regional championship game as it scored a pair of early goals and rolled to a 9-0 victory over the Braves. The win gives the Wildcats their second regional title in as many seasons – not too bad since the program has only been around for two years.

“Last year was amazing to win it in our first year,” Louisburg junior Bailey Belcher said. “This year, we just wanted to capitalize on it to show that we are still here and not going to let it go.”

The Wildcats (12-5-1) proved they weren’t going anywhere as they scored two goals in the first two minutes and picked apart the Bonner Springs defense to a tune five first half goals. They now find themselves one victory away from reaching its first state semifinal.

Louisburg has had quite the two-year run as it has now totaled two regional championships and 26 victories in the first two years of its existence.

“It feels good,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “Winning a regional title is always a goal, or at the very least to play for one, and I think that puts our program in a good spot. When the kids get a taste of it, they just get fired up and we are a different team. We played 10 times better this time than our last game and the girls get into it.

“It is fun and doesn’t happen very often, especially for a second-year program. Now to win 26 games and counting in our first two seasons is incredible. Some teams don’t win that in six or seven seasons.”



Louisburg's Savannah Reinhart (left) battles a Bonner Springs player for position Wednesday in Louisburg. Reinhart had three assists in the win.

Bonner Springs had a difficult time slowing down the Wildcat attack – more specifically Mackenzie Scholtz. The freshman forward had her best day of the season as she tallied a game-high five goals and also had three assists.

Belcher added a pair of goals – both coming in the first half – and freshman Erin Lemke accounted for the other. The Wildcats also scored on an own goal to start the second half.

“It is really cool, just being a part of this as a freshman,” Scholtz said. “We have worked as a team all season, and we knew we could do this and we did. We just want to keep going and fight to the end.

“I feel like I had a lot of energy for the most part, but I

had no idea that I could do that. It was a good feeling to be able to help the team like that.”

The Wildcats did a good job moving the ball around as they broke through the Bonner Springs defense with ease. Junior Savannah Reinhart was on the starting end on some of those goals as she tied Scholtz with a team-high three assists. Senior Madisen Simpson and sophomore Hallie Hutsell also had an assist in the win.

“We figured we would have good runs and be able to cut them down the middle with Bailey and Scholtzy,” Conley said. “I told them they were going to get tons of looks and that they just have to pick a corner and bury them. We just had breakaway after breakaway and that is a credit to their teammates. If it wasn’t for those outside midifelders, or Bailey playing it wide, (Mackenzie) might not have those wide open lanes. She just took full advantage of it.”

Within the first minute, Scholtz put the Wildcats on the board with a goal and then Belcher followed with another to give Louisburg a quick 2-0 advantage.

Bonner Springs didn’t back down at that point as the Braves moved the ball up the field and were awarded a penalty kick when senior defender Bryn O’Meara was called for a foul in the box.



Goalie Shay Whiting dives to save a penalty kick early in Wednesday's regional championship game.

Louisburg goalie Shay Whiting came to the rescue with a diving save to stop the penalty kick and kept the Braves off of the board. More importantly, it kept the momentum on the side of the Wildcats and they were able to use that to get an even bigger lead.

"That was huge," Conley said. "Shay made a great save there. You know, I thought that was a good stick by Bryn and not sure there was a foul there. Still, Shay came up big and did her job. That is the thing with Shay now, she is just ringing the bell and going to work. She has been really good the last couple of weeks."

It was Whiting's ninth shutout of the season as she got help from the Wildcat defensive back line of O'Meara, Camdyn Clark, Kaitlyn Lewer and Hannah Straub as they limited Bonner Springs' shots on goal.

The scoring onslaught continued in the first half for Louisburg as Belcher scored to make it 3-0 a few minutes later. Scholtz then scored two more times to give Louisburg a 5-0 halftime lead and herself at hat trick.

Louisburg scored on an own goal to start the second half, followed by two more goals from Scholtz and another from Lemke to secure the championship.



Defender Camdyn Clark (right) knocks the ball out of the back Wednesday.

“Bonner Springs ran that high line quite a bit and ultimately we just shredded it,” Conley said. “We did a good job of finding feet, playing the through ball and off to the races we went. It is something that was going to be key in this and that it was going to help us a lot.

“The way we play, we look to counter a lot. I think that helped when they got four high, then we could just push and go. Even with the wind, we had a ton of space to run and that was very beneficial to us. We just worked really hard. We started subbing about every eight minutes just trying to push

them and try to wear Bonner Springs down a little bit. We looked a lot fresher than they were.”



The Louisburg girls soccer team gathers under the scoreboard for a team picture following their regional championship win over Bonner Springs.

Louisburg will try for a spot in its first state tournament Tuesday when it hosts Piper in the state quarterfinals. The match is set to begin at 5 p.m.

The Wildcats fell in the state quarterfinals last season and they are ready to take another step forward.

“Last year’s loss definitely gives us motivation,” Belcher said. “We have to capitalize on it. We need to push farther than what we did last year and show everyone that we can do more.”

Wildcats roll Ottawa en route to regional title game



Louisburg freshman Mackenzie Scholtz dribbles past the Ottawa goalkeeper Tuesday during the first round of the Class 4-1A regional tournament in Louisburg. The Wildcats won 10-0 and will face Bonner Springs in the regional title game at 4 p.m., today in Louisburg.

Following its 10-0 win over Ottawa on Tuesday in the first round of the Class 4-1A regional tournament, the Louisburg High School girls soccer team had a chance to celebrate a little.

The jubilation was short-lived – and for a reason.

Louisburg will host Bonner Springs in the regional championship at 4 p.m. today with the opportunity to win their second straight regional title. So, to make sure the Wildcats are ready, the team got together for a practice immediately following the win over Ottawa.

It was not your typical way to spend a postgame evening.

“This gave us a chance to work on some things that we weren’t able to work on in the game,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We really need to get some more work in so that we are ready to go for (today).”

The game was called early in the second half when the Wildcats

scored the 10th goal and invoked the mercy rule.

Six different players scored for the Wildcats as junior Bailey Belcher and freshman Mackenzie Scholtz each recorded a hat trick to lead the way in a game where Ottawa never took a shot on goal.

Louisburg opened the scoring on a goal from Belcher seven minutes into the contest, but the Wildcats struggled to get going early. However, once they found success, there wasn't much Ottawa could do to stop them.



Louisburg sophomore Hallie Hutsell passes the ball up the field Tuesday against Ottawa.

"We played alright," Conley said. "Going into the wind, I think that is going to help us a little bit with our next

game. Playing feet was the big thing for us. They (Bonner Springs) are going to play a high line just like Ottawa did, so this was a good warm up.

“The first 15 minutes I think we got a little frustrated because we couldn’t figure it out even though we talked about it Monday, then before the game. Once we solved the puzzle, it got going pretty quick.”

Scholtz responded with back-to-back goals to make it 3-0, then senior Quincy Rice and junior Savannah Reinhart each followed with a score. Belcher made it 6-0 with 17 minutes left in the first half, then sophomore Hayli Detherage found the back of the net.

Belcher and Scholtz each scored again to make it 9-0 at halftime. Then just a couple minutes into the second half, Morgan Messer clinched the win with a goal to improve the Wildcats’ record to 11-5-1 on the season.

“This win gives us confidence so that we can get things going,” Conley said. “Quincy was able to get a goal, and she hit a rocket off the post, so this was good for her to get things going. I think if we would have a more competitive game it might help us for our next one, but it is a give and take, and I think we can take a lot of positives out of this one.”



Freshman Erin Lemke (left) celebrate with teammate Quincy Rice following Rice's goal in the first half Tuesday.

Goalies Shay Whiting and Carson Buffington combined to earn the shutout and this was Whiting's eighth clean sheet of the season.

The Wildcats will face a stiffer challenge today against Bonner Springs (8-9), who defeated Basehor-Linwood, 7-0, on Tuesday. Both teams will be playing on back-to-back days.

"It will be tough because we have such young kids," Conley said. "We have a lot of freshmen and sophomores, so that might be different for some of them. We are going to have to be mentally tough against a good Bonner team and we are getting better at it. We will just see what happens.

"We will need to play to the best of our ability and execute to win a regional championship. I think the excuse that we are

a young team is no longer relevant. These young ladies have a full season under our belt and we will play like it here in the playoffs. The weather is going to cause some adversities, but it's nothing we have not dealt with this season. I am really excited how this group of girls have grown over the season and how they have overcome so many adversities and injuries. This is going to be fun!"

Senior Night Blowout: Wildcats shutout Cyclones



Louisburg senior Madisen Simpson heads the ball away during the Wildcats' match with Ottawa on Monday during Senior Night. The Wildcats defeated the Cyclones 10-0 to get their 10th win of the season.

Seniors Madisen Simpson, Bryn O'Meara, Lily Cook and Quincy Rice were flooded with all different kinds of emotions as they were honored during the Senior Night ceremony Monday prior to their game with Ottawa.

They were proud. There were some sad tears, followed by some happy ones. They felt honored.

Despite all those emotions, the four Louisburg seniors – along with their teammates – felt only one thing after the game was over.

Victory.

The Wildcats needed just one half to get a 10-0 win over Ottawa at the Wildcat Sports Complex. Louisburg's 10 goals forced the mercy rule and the players got a chance to celebrate a little earlier than usual.

"I know it has only been two years, but these kids have been with me for multiple summers and have been engaged in multiple aspects of our program," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "To be honest, all these kids have given their absolute everything. They all showed up to offseason stuff and busted their butt and worked hard. A lot of these kids are involved in different things, so for them to show up and come fight was a fitting way to cap this off."

It was the underclassmen who got the Wildcats (10-4-1) off to a good start on the scoreboard.

Junior Savannah Reinhart scored the game's first goal five minutes in, and from there, the flood gates opened. Freshman Mackenzie Scholtz scored one and then fellow freshman Trinity Moore responded with flurry of her own.

Moore, who has been easing her way back from a foot injury, recorded three goals in a span of about 10 minutes to get the hat trick and her team a 5-0 lead.

"Trinity is a super aggressive kid," Conley said. "She is back being fit again and she works hard. We definitely got her some good looks. Ottawa played a high line, so it made easy for us to get it and go. She just ran by people out there and she is like a little deer. She has been out for so long, and dealt with such frustration, and now she looks like she is ready to go. She is a grinder and a competitor and that is all you can

ask.”

Scholtz followed that up with her second goal of the game and junior Bailey Belcher added one to make it 7-0. Conley wanted to make sure his seniors got involved in the scoring too.

Rice put one in the back of the net to give Louisburg an 8-0 advantage, and after Reinhart scored her second goal, it was O’Meara’s turn.



Senior Bryn O’Meara hits a shot past the Ottawa goalie Monday in the Wildcats’ 10-0 win.

O’Meara, who is the team’s outside back on defense, was moved up top by Conley to try and get her a good look.

“She just looked at me and yelled, ‘Coach, what do I do?’”

Conley said. "I just told her to go run and score a goal."

O'Meara did just that. After a few missed opportunities, the Louisburg senior snuck a shot past the Ottawa goalie to give Louisburg a 10-0 lead with 10 minutes remaining in the first half.

"To see Quincy get one and then Bryn get her first varsity goal was a lot of fun," Conley said. "It was cool to see their teammates do whatever they could and get them a good chance and have one. It took a couple chances, but it was good to get the icing on the cake eventually. It was great to have a good finish like that."

It was a fitting ending to what was a special evening for the Wildcats. Rice and O'Meara scored a goal, Simpson played strong in the midfield and Cook walked onto the field for the final time after missing most of the season with an injury.



Louisburg seniors (from left) Madisen Simpson, Bryn O'Meara, manager Noah Juarez, Lily Cook and Quincy Rice were honored

Monday during the Senior Night ceremony.

“They are just fantastic,” Conley said of his seniors. “Lily got knocked out in that De Soto game and she just hasn’t been able to come back. We got her to walk out with us one last time to start, just so she could enjoy it a little bit, but it is still not the same. She is a kid that always had a great attitude and works so hard. Her work ethic is one that the kids want to emulate because it is what you need to have. She is a great kid as are all the seniors. They all work very hard and have good attitudes.”

The Wildcats have one more regular season game at 6 p.m. today when they travel to Spring Hill as both teams are fighting for the No. 1 seed in the Northeast Regional. Conley hopes it is still a few more weeks before he has to say goodbye to his seniors for good.

“I don’t want to be done just yet,” he said. “I want to keep them around a little while longer, talk to them, hang out with them and see them before they get too cool and run away. They are like a bunch of little daughters. You just grow attached to them and it will be hard to see them go.”

Wildcats rally to beat Kansas City Christian



Louisburg goalie Shay Whiting comes out to make a save Thursday against Baldwin at Baldwin High School. Whiting earned her sixth shutout of the season and the Wildcats came back the next day to defeat Kansas City Christian 5-3.

The Louisburg girls soccer team had its work cut out for itself last week as the Wildcats had to play three games in four days.

This late in the season, every win matters for the Wildcats as they are trying to get the highest seed possible for the upcoming regional tournament. Louisburg certainly took a big step forward in that regard.

After losing to De Soto, 3-0, last Tuesday, the Wildcats redeemed themselves in a big way.

Louisburg shutout Baldwin on Thursday and then it followed it up with a 5-3 victory Friday at home over Kansas City Christian. The wins improved the Wildcats' record to 9-4-1 on the season and puts them in good position for the postseason.

"That win was really good for our program," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said of the Kansas City Christian win. "It gives us the opportunity to possibly get to 10 wins and almost ensures we will host a regional. The girls are really determined and are playing to my style of play almost perfectly. I couldn't be more excited how we are playing right now."

The Wildcats had to work a little extra harder to get the win as they had to play from behind for most of the match.

Kansas City Christian (KCC) opened the match with a goal to take an early lead, but freshman Mackenzie Scholtz tied it up to get the Wildcats on the board. KCC followed it up with another score, and again, Louisburg tied it on a goal from

junior Bailey Belcher.

KCC found the back of the net before halftime to take a 3-2 advantage, but the Wildcats came out firing in the second half.

Belcher scored back-to-back goals to give the Wildcats a 4-3 lead and also earned a hat trick in the process. Scholtz sealed the win with her second goal later in the half as the Wildcats' defense tightened up in the final 40 minutes.

Freshman Avery O'Meara, junior Savannah Reinhart and Scholtz each had an assist in the win.

"It was an incredibly physical game that got pretty chippy towards the end," Conley said "We came out a little flat and struggled to play our game for the first 20 minutes or so. It could have been due to the little bit of lay over from playing the previous night, but that's no excuse.

"We were trying to do too much to pick up teammates, instead of letting the ball do the work and playing within ourselves. We did come back three different times until we finally took the lead for good. The girls kept fighting and grinding. It was great to see how they all stuck together and didn't give up. I was extremely happy how hard we played and how we responded to such a physical game."

Louisburg will play its final regular season home game at 6 p.m. tonight when it hosts Ottawa for Senior Night. The Wildcats will end the regular season Thursday at Spring Hill.

Wildcats blank Baldwin on the road

BALDWIN CITY – After getting shutout itself two days before against De Soto, the Louisburg girls soccer team returned the favor Thursday against Baldwin.

The Wildcats scored two goals in each half and left Baldwin City with a 4-0 victory over the Bulldogs.

“Our girls have a lot of expectations and goals for themselves and we talk about only being as good as your last game,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “Playing a good Baldwin side like we did was fantastic. We were focused and played very determined. We did a fantastic job letting the ball do the work and moving off of the ball. I loved how much energy we played with as well.”

Junior Savannah Reinhart helped out with all four Louisburg goals. Reinhart had her best day of the season as she scored a pair of goals and assisted on the other two.



Louisburg junior Savannah Reinhart sends the ball toward the net for one of her two goals Thursday against Baldwin.

“Savannah had the best day of her career,” Conley said. “Her runs off the ball were fantastic and when she received the ball she knew exactly what she wanted to do with it. Her vision and anticipation for the game has been really, really

good the past couple weeks. I could not be happier for her. She was definitely the lady of the match for us. “

Junior Bailey Belcher opened the scoring early for Louisburg when she found the back of the net just three minutes into the match on an assists from Reinhart.

Reinhart assisted on the Wildcats’ second goal just a few minutes later after freshman Mackenzie Scholtz scored to give Louisburg a 2-0 halftime lead.

Baldwin had a couple different opportunities with shots on goal, but the Wildcat defense held, including goalie Shay Whiting. The Louisburg junior, along with sophomore goalie Carson Buffington, combined to earn the shutout – which was Whiting’s sixth of the season.

Louisburg’s attack continued to work well with each other in the second half as Reinhart scored both goals in the second half on assists from Belcher and Scholtz to lock up the win.

“We did a great job of moving the ball and being very productive on the offensive end,” Conley said. “I am not sure it was our best game, but it was top three for sure. Our team chemistry is at an all-time high right now. The girls are understanding the system, and with the style of play, they are making it look easy right now.

“The positive from all of our injuries is we have had a lot of different girls step up and now they are playing major roles on our team. I am very excited with how the girls are executing offensively.”

Three schools to join Frontier League



Three schools have accepted invitations, or will soon, to join the Frontier League for the 2018-19 season and beyond.

Piper, Bonner Springs and Tonganoxie will be leaving their current home – the Kaw Valley League – to join the Frontier after all three were offered spots during a meeting in early April.

Their addition will now bring the Frontier League to 10 members, along with Louisburg, Paola, Ottawa, Spring Hill, De Soto, Baldwin and Eudora. The trio of schools made presentations to the current Frontier League members for admittance due to the fact the Kaw Valley is in the process of breaking up. Current member Bishop Ward is leaving the league next school year, which leaves them at six.

Piper quickly accepted the invitation following a vote of its board of education and is looking forward to joining the Frontier.

“We are extremely excited to get into a league with like-size schools and competition levels,” Piper High School activities director Doug Key said. “We believe Piper High School is good fit for the league due to the competition level in all activities and will match up well. We have played all current schools in various activities and felt like this would be a positive move for the future.

“Being in a league with various size schools and us being the smallest wasn’t going to be optimal. We are still are competitive in many areas, but we needed to secure a more balanced future. We feel like being in the middle, size-wise, will keep us competitive for years to come.”

According to this year’s classification numbers, Piper has a current enrollment of 601 students. Turner is the Kaw Valley’s biggest school with 1,114 students, followed by Lansing (910), Bonner Springs (758), Basehor-Linwood (710) and Tonganoxie (618).

Bonner Springs, Piper and Tonganoxie compare to other Frontier League programs. De Soto is the biggest school in the league with 854 students, followed by Ottawa (709), Spring Hill (699), Paola (612), Louisburg (563), Eudora (471) and Baldwin (410).

Bonner Springs’ board of education also approved the move to the Frontier League and Bonner Springs High School principal Rick Moulin echoed Key’s statement.

“We have competed against teams in the Frontier League the past several years,” Moulin said. “The schools in the Frontier League are a lot like Bonner Springs – we are competitive and value sportsmanship. The teams in the Frontier League are similar in size to Bonner Springs, which will be a great gauge for us as we try to compete at the highest level possible in 4A. Bonner Springs is a small town community, with great community support, much like the schools in the Frontier League.

“We are excited to be joining with Piper and Tonganoxie. We hope to continue to be able to compete against Basehor-Linwood, Lansing and Turner. I have a lot of respect for their schools and their programs. Ultimately, the Frontier League was a better fit for our students and our community.”

Tonganoxie hasn’t officially accepted the invitation, but it

is just waiting for its board of education to approve the move during its May 8 meeting. At that point, according to Tonganoxie High School principal Mark Farrar, it will immediately send letter accepting the invite.

"We are very excited to join the Frontier League," Farrar said. "This new partnership will be very good for our students as well as our community. Joining the Frontier League will provide some great opportunities for our students from an athletic and activities standpoint. Tonganoxie mirrors many of the activities that most or all Frontier League schools offer. We see it as a league that will be a good fit for many years to come.

"One of the things that I think gets overlooked is the idea that a strong league doesn't just offer opportunities on a playing field, but it also offers a chance for kids to network and make lifelong connections with students from all across the league. The Frontier League is a strong and stable league and we believe that it can advance the overall mission of what we want to do at Tonganoxie."

Louisburg High School activities director Darin Gagnebin now believes the league is healthier than ever.

"By adding teams to our league, it solidifies our league numbers for years to come ensuring that we, as a league, will remain strong and competitive whether schools decide to leave or stay," Gagnebin said. "We could have been in a situation in which the Frontier League could have dwindled to four or five schools, but instead we will be stronger at 10 teams, if all teams decided to stay.

That situation came about in March when it was reported by the Tonganoxie Mirror that Kaw Valley League member Lansing wanted to create a larger league that would have contained all or some combinations of Lansing, Blue Valley Southwest, De Soto, Leavenworth, Bonner Springs, Basehor-Linwood, Tonganoxie,

Ottawa, Piper, Spring Hill, Turner and Topeka schools Seaman, Shawnee Heights and Topeka West.

A meeting was held between all the schools to look at possibilities of building a stronger league that would rebuild the current Kaw Valley that has Lansing, Turner, Piper, Bonner Springs, Tonganoxie and Basehor-Linwood.

The Frontier League responded with meetings of its own shortly after to discuss each member's happiness in the league after De Soto, Spring Hill and Ottawa attended the March meeting with Lansing.

De Soto mentioned needing more competition at the sub-varsity level since it has a growing enrollment and looked at the possibility of playing in a league with bigger schools since it has made the jump to Class 5A.

Spring Hill's enrollment also looks to make that jump in three to four years, while Ottawa's enrollment usually hovers around the line between 4A and 5A. Still, all three schools stated during league meetings they were happy in their current position, with De Soto and Spring Hill stating they might need to make a move due to increasing enrollment numbers.

Faced with the possibility of losing at least two members, the Frontier invited Kaw Valley members to make presentations to join the league in order to fill those spots. Piper, Tonganoxie and Bonner Springs all made presentations and the Frontier League principals all offered invitations shortly after.

At this point, it appears the league is going to move forward with 10 members as no school has stated their desire to leave the Frontier – however, it doesn't mean it can't happen in the near future.

"I cannot speak for other schools in the Frontier League about their desire to stay or to leave," Gagnebin said. "I know some

are considering their options and will do what they believe is in the best interest of their school, and I would support them in whatever they decide. I do believe though whatever they decide, with the addition of these new schools to our league, the Frontier League will remain solid in numbers and will continue to be one of the most competitive leagues in Class 4A.

"I believe the three schools that chose to petition our league for membership will be a great fit for the Frontier League. They offer all sports and activities that are currently offered by the league at all levels. Their enrollments, though larger than Louisburg, will put them in the middle to upper middle in size within the league."

The league schedule will also look different beginning with the 2018-19 season, as there will no longer be a double round-robin schedule in certain sports and not every school will play each other in football.

"The biggest challenge will be league scheduling," Gagnebin said. "Although it will change how we schedule things as a league, most league schools already have some or all of these schools on some of their athletic schedules already. It could increase the amount of non-league games we have to go out and find in some sports, since with 10 teams you can no longer play a double-round-robin schedule as we have currently, due to the amount of games allowed by KSHSAA.

"This is both good and bad, meaning, it could increase travel and some expense, but it allows us greater flexibility in the schedule to play other teams outside the league as well. One negative will be in football. With 10 teams, we will not be able to play every team in the league as we do now. As stated before though, solidifying the league as far as numbers go and increasing the competitiveness of the league are also positives."

Wildcats shut out Piper for second straight win



Louisburg freshman Mackenzie Scholtz splits the Piper defense as she dribbles into the box for a shot on goal Thursday in Louisburg. The Wildcats defeated Piper 4-0.

The Louisburg High School girls soccer team found the back of the net quickly as it scored three goals in less than 30 minutes against Piper.

That was almost a month ago.

Still, Louisburg picked up right where it left off when inclement weather postponed the April 4 match. When the game resumed Thursday, the Wildcats scored a goal a minute into the contest and ran away for a 4-0 win over Piper.

“We came out early and got on them quick,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “Looking at the score, it is easy to come out and get complacent and go through the motions. Piper has several really good players and it was important that we did a good job of standing them up and forcing them to do things they aren’t comfortable doing. It was good to come out and pick up where we left off and get this game finished.”

Junior Savannah Reinhart didn't waste much time when the game resumed as she scored the lone goal Thursday before the two teams had a chance to get settled.

Going back to April 4, Reinhart finished with a pair of goals to lead Louisburg (7-3-1), while freshman Mackenzie Scholtz had two assists and a goal. Junior Bailey Belcher also added a goal and an assist.

Conley liked what he saw out of his offensive attack as the Lady Cats had other chances to score later in the match, but couldn't connect.

"Our final third is doing a great job finding feet, running off the ball and making great cuts," he said. "Our give-and-go's are just shredding teams right now. If we keep doing that, and find feet, we are tough team to stop offensively."

The back line also limited Piper's shots on goal and helped goalie Shay Whiting earn her fifth shutout of the season. Kaitlyn Lewer, Camdyn Clark, Bryn O'Meara, Hannah Straub and others kept Piper away from the net.



Louisburg's Kaitlyn Lewer clears the ball out of the back for the Wildcats on Thursday against Piper.

"Defensively, I thought we did a really good job of talking," Conley said. "In the second half against Baldwin, we really picked that up and it continued. The biggest issue right now is when we do call the ball, other girls have to get out of the way. I am proud of the way the girls talked and they were super aggressive in the back. That is what we are looking for."

It is a big week for the Wildcats as far as postseason seeding goes. Louisburg has three games in five days and it starts at 6 p.m., Tuesday when it travels to undefeated De Soto.

The Wildcats will then travel to Baldwin on Thursday for a 3:45 p.m. matchup – a game that was originally scheduled for

Monday, but had to be moved due to wet field conditions. Louisburg will wrap it all up Friday at home against Kansas City Christian.

“It is huge,” Conley said. “We have Baldwin, which is a physical team, and then we have one of the best teams in Class 5A right now in De Soto, who hasn’t lost a game yet. They are trying to go undefeated and it would be great to play spoiler there. It will be on the turf so it will be quick and we just have to be ready to go. We have back-to-back away games, and that definitely isn’t a good thing, but it is what it is. We are just going to do our job, take one game at a time and see what happens.”

Wildcats end losing streak with win over Baldwin



Louisburg senior Quincy Rice heads the ball near the goal Tuesday during the Wildcats’ game with Baldwin in Louisburg. The Wildcats ended a two-game losing streak with a 4-2 win over Baldwin.

Going into Tuesday’s game with Baldwin, the Louisburg High School girls soccer team was dealing with something none of them had felt before.

For the first time in program history, the Wildcats were on a losing streak – albeit only two games. Still, it made head coach Kyle Conley wonder how his team was going to respond.

The Wildcats didn't let him down.

Although both teams combined for five goals in the first half, the Louisburg defense tightened up in the second half and added a goal to get a 4-2 win over Baldwin at the Wildcat Sports Complex.

"Baldwin is a very aggressive and physical team, but I think our kids responded and did a nice job," Conley said. "It was really good for us to get a positive result, considering the losing streak was a first for us. Baldwin was a team that was ranked No. 1 in our region prior to the game, so for us to come out and play as hard as we did was fantastic. I loved how aggressive we played to match their intensity."

Louisburg (6-3-1) was especially aggressive on the offensive end and Baldwin had a tough time keeping up with the Wildcats' speed – more specifically – Mackenzie Scholtz.

The freshman forward outran the Baldwin back line, which led to a couple one-on-one opportunities with the Baldwin goalie. Scholtz took advantage of that as she scored two goals and assisted on another to lead the Wildcats.

"Mackenzie has been playing really well and really buying into my philosophy," Conley said. "She is moving a ton off of the ball and playing very simple. She has been getting better each and every game. Her greatest quality might be how she gets everyone else involved in the game. When our attack buys into the game plan by moving the ball quickly and moving off the ball, we are really tough to stop."

Scholtz used her speed and got the Wildcats on the board early as she scored four minutes into the contest, but Baldwin responded with a goal of its own to tie the match with 13

minutes remaining in the first half.

In between that time, Louisburg junior Bailey Belcher had a chance to put the Wildcats up even more as she had two shots that went just wide and another when she was taken down in the box on shot, but no call was made.

A minute after Baldwin scored the tying goal, Scholtz responded as she got a through ball from Belcher and beat the Bulldog defense for a goal, then with seven minutes left in the first half, Belcher scored on a shot from an assist from Scholtz to make it 3-1.

It appeared the Wildcats were going to go into halftime with a two-goal lead, but Baldwin made two long passes up the field and managed to get a goal with 27 seconds left.

Louisburg's defense didn't allow the Bulldog players to get behind them in the second half as it limited the Bulldogs' shots on goal and never threatened to give up its lead.

"Defensively we are still working on our communication," Conley said. "I felt the girls did a very nice job in the second half talking and having each other covered. We struggled at first with their formation, but after a few adjustments I felt we were really strong in the back. We had depth and were able to support our outside backs a lot more. We will keep working and keep getting better."

Belcher sealed the win for Louisburg late in the second half as she made a defender miss at the top of the box and then struck the ball with her left foot for her second goal of the game with four minutes remaining.



Freshman Erin Lemke kicks the ball away from a Baldwin player Tuesday. Lemke recorded an assist in the win.

The Wildcat offense had more than 10 shots on goal in the game and put pressure on the Baldwin defense. Along with Scholtz and Belcher, Louisburg also got a good performance out of its midfielders, especially from Erin Lemke. The Louisburg freshman recorded an assist and started several runs toward

the goal

"I think the midfield did a very nice job of playing as a unit and keeping us spread out," Conley said. "It made it difficult for them to mark us and swarm the ball defensively. The midfielders did a very nice job in the second half of the Basehor game and for the majority of this game of moving the ball and moving to find space. We struggle when we stand and makes us way too easy to defend.

"Erin has been playing really well right now. She is always looking to get teammates involved and works her tail off. I am very pleased with how much she has improved and how hard she plays."

Louisburg returns to action at 4:30 today for a makeup game with Piper in Louisburg. They will finish a game that was postponed, in which the Wildcats have a 3-0 lead with 10 minutes left in the first half.

Wildcats come up short on the road

The last time Louisburg faced off with Basehor-Linwood was in the regional championship game a year ago.

The Wildcats left with their first regional championship and they hoped to have the same result last Friday in Basehor. Unfortunately, the Bobcats got their revenge as they held on for a 2-1 win over Louisburg.

Basehor-Linwood scored two first half goals to take an early lead, but the Wildcats responded in the second half and got several shots on the goal. One of them went in on a goal from Savannah Reinhart, thanks to an assist from Mackenzie Scholtz, but the Wildcats weren't able to find the back of the net again.

“The Basehor game was a little frustrating,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We gave up two soft goals on their only two shots of the game. The second half we absolutely dominated. They only actually made it over midfield only a few times. We had a massive amount of opportunities and failed to capitalize. It was tough, but we worked hard to get back to moving the ball well and attacking the other team instead of being passive.”