

# Wildcats roll Tonganoxie in season opener



Louisburg junior Kaitlyn Lewer clears the ball away from a Tonganoxie player during the Wildcats' season opener Thursday in Louisburg. The Wildcats rolled to a 6-0 win over the Chieftains.

The Louisburg High School girls soccer team has made it a mission to try and get back to the state tournament this season.

Louisburg took a step in the right direction Thursday as the Wildcats picked up a win in their season opener and did so in convincing fashion.

The Wildcats used four second half goals and shutout Tonganoxie, 6-0, at Wildcat Soccer Complex and avenged a 0-0 result in last year's season opener.

"It was really nice that we got off on the right foot," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "It was an incredibly physical game and it took us a while to adjust. I felt the girls got better as the game went on and we started to play like I expected us to in the second half. I really like the amount of grit and toughness our kids showed and how we didn't back down. We were about as ready as we could have been and I think that we showed what our potential could be."

Physical play was the common theme throughout the contest as Tonganoxie was called for multiple fouls that included three yellow cards and a red card late in the match.

Those fouls didn't seem to bother the Wildcat players much as they were able to put away two penalty kicks and didn't let the emotions of the game affect their play.

"For the most part, the girls played extremely hard and were pretty focused," Conley said. "I am glad that no one seriously got hurt and that we didn't back down from the challenge. It was a great first match and I think opened some of our girls' eyes to what playing high school soccer is all about. I would like our speed of play to improve and if we played the ball faster, we could have avoided a lot of that contact."

Senior Bailey Belcher appeared like she was in midseason form for the Wildcats as she recorded a hat trick in her first game of the season and scored two of her three goals in the first half to give Louisburg a 2-0 halftime advantage.

Belcher opened the scoring in the first 10 minutes of the contest with a free kick from 20 yards out, then midway through the first half, converted a penalty kick after being fouled in the box.



**Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher puts a shot on goal Thursday. Belcher had three goals in the victory.**

The Wildcats were able to maneuver through the Tonganoxie defense through most of the night as they put 20 shots on goal, but struggled a little in the first half to find a rhythm offensively.

“Offensively in the first half, I felt we wasted a lot of opportunities,” Conley said. “We struggled to put the ball on frame, as well as the timing of our runs. The second half we were much more successful with our timing and how we moved the ball. We could have been better, but for the first game, we responded and played well.”

Louisburg blew the match open in the second half as sophomore Skylar Bowman struck a ball from close to 20 yards out to give the Wildcats a 3-0 lead with 17 minutes remaining.

Three minutes later, Belcher dribbled the ball into the box and had a 1-on-1 with the Tonganoxie goalie, but the Chieftain keeper tripped Belcher while she was going in to score and was given a red card, forcing her to leave the game.

Sophomore Mackenzie Scholtz took the penalty kick and found the back of the net for a 4-0 advantage. Belcher and sophomore Erin Lemke each put away goals in the final minutes to help seal the win.



**Sophomore Hannah Straub (left) beats a Tonganoxie player to a 50-50 ball Thursday.**

The Wildcats dominated possession for much of the contest, but the Louisburg defense didn't give Tonganoxie many good looks when they had the ball on their side.

Louisburg's back line of juniors Kaitlyn Lewer and Camdyn



Clark, along with sophomores Hannah Straub and Avery O'Meara, freshman Olivia Barber and senior Avery Barber gave up just three shots on goal.

Senior goalie Shay Whiting saved all three opportunities and earned the shutout in the process.

"Defensively we tried some new things and worked hard," Conley said. "We did a fairly nice job standing up our opponent and did a really good job of having support of players on the ball. All of the girls did a nice job of marking and communicating. I think the communication was really good between our defensive group."

The Wildcats will have this week off for Spring Break, before returning to action Mar. 27 when they travel to De Soto for their first Frontier League game of the season. Varsity is set to begin at approximately 6 p.m.

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## **LHS girls soccer hopes for another state appearance**



The Louisburg High School girls soccer team hopes to have more celebrations like this one for the 2018 season after finishing fourth at the Class 4-1A state tournament last year. The Wildcats open their season Thursday when they host Tonganoxie.

It wasn't exactly the finish it was looking for to end last year, but despite losing its final two matches, the Louisburg High School girls soccer team had its best season in school history.

The Wildcats made the Class 4-1A state semifinals in just its second year and went on to finish fourth. As good of an accomplishment as that was, the ending to last season was more disappointing than celebratory for many of the players.

"It is not the fondest memory I have, but unfortunately for me it is the predominant memory of that season," senior goalie Shay Whiting said. "I think it is something that everyone thinks about and we are all coming back with that fresh in our minds and have a state of revenge."

Louisburg suffered a 1-0 loss to Thomas More Prep in the state semifinals and then fell 8-0 to Maize South in the third-place match the following day that ended Louisburg's season with a 13-7-1 record.

"To be quite honest, we can look at it glass half empty and say we gave up nine goals in two games and we think about that," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "On the other hand, you can look at it half-full and say we are one goal away from playing for a state championship. It was a huge feat for a second year program, but that was last year, so it is our motivation now to prove that it wasn't a fluke. These girls are pretty motivated. We are returning a strong core of kids and the sky's the limit for them."

Yes, the Wildcats are entering the 2018 season with high aspirations and will be considered one of the top returning 4A programs in the state. Louisburg graduated just four seniors from a season ago and brings back several all-league and all-state players.

At the top of that list is senior Bailey Belcher, who will anchor one of the strengths for the Wildcats in the midfield. Belcher is a two-time first team all-Frontier League and all-state player, who has provided a bulk of the Wildcats' scoring the last two years.

"Honestly, we have a chance to go to state just like we did last year," Belcher said. "Last year at this time, it seemed a little far-fetched that we could go to state, but we did it. I feel like this year that we are going to be even better than we were and state is something we need to strive for."

Last season, Belcher finished 29 goals and 12 assists to lead Louisburg. As a team, the Wildcats scored 82 goals last season and they return more than 90 percent of that scoring.



**Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher led the Wildcats in scoring last season with 29 goals.**

"We only saw one dimension of Bailey's game the last two years," Conley said. "I would like to see her play with a little more finesse and move the ball a little bit quicker. She just uses her God-given ability to just run by people and next year (in college) she won't be able to do that. We are going to push really hard for her to be a better player and let the ball do most of the work for her."

"At the same time, she is just like a bulldog out there and you have to let her go out and make plays. She needs to take her game to another level and she can. I don't think she has peaked at all and I think she can have an unbelievable year."

Sophomore Mackenzie Scholtz was also a big scoring threat for the Wildcats last season as she added 27 goals and a team-high 18 assists from the forward spot.

Another sophomore, Erin Lemke, will also be a fixture at the midfield/forward spot and both players have had big offseasons. Lemke scored the program's most historic goal to date as her golden goal in the state quarterfinals against Piper propelled Louisburg to the semifinals.

"Mackenzie and Erin are going to take huge bounds," Conley said. "They had really solid freshman years. Mackenzie had more of the stats, but Erin scored the most important goal in our program's history. I think both are going to take off and have huge years. It has been fun to see them improve so much."





**Sophomore Mackenzie Scholtz is one of the Lady Cats' top returning scorers as she finished with 27 goals last season to go along with 18 assists.**

Senior Savannah Reinhart, who earned second team all-league honors last season, returns in the midfield for Louisburg. Sophomores Trinity Moore, Avery O'Meara, Morgan Messer, Lily McDaniel and juniors Hallie Hutsell, Hayli Detherage and Leia Shaffer could all see time in the midfield.

As strong as the Wildcat attack seems to be, they also return a strong defensive core, starting with Whiting. The Louisburg senior earned first team all-state honors last season and hopes to have a big year.

"I am pretty comfortable back there now, especially when it comes to talking to my defense," she said. "I know more about the game, so I am able to help them in that regard of where they need to be it. Skill-wise, I have some great goalies

behind me and we push each other every practice. It is very competitive, but at the same time we are all there for each other and we are all friends.”

One of those goalies is junior Carson Buffington, who is in her second year with the program and both have provided a lot of competition in practice.

“I think both are poised to have good years,” Conley said. “I could dabble with splitting time or we could just give it to just to Shay to start. Both have been so incredibly good and it has been a good competition and is a good problem to have. It is Shay’s spot to lose, but Carson is pushing hard and I think competition just brings out the best in players. They are huge supporters of each other and they encourage each other tremendously. We are going to be really solid there.”

Louisburg also returns three of its four defenders from last year, including junior Camdyn Clark, who earned second team all-league and all-state honors for her work in the back. She will be joined by junior Kaitlyn Lewer.



**Junior Camdyn Clark returns to lead an experienced Louisburg defense after she earned all-league and all-state honors last season.**

Straub, who played back last season, could be there again, while another spot is up for grabs. Senior Avery Barber, freshman Olivia Barber, Moore and sophomore Skylar Bowman could all find time on defense.

"I think attacking wise we are going to be incredibly fast and will be incredibly talented," Conley said. "We will be really tough to defend against. In the back, we are still kind of playing with that a little bit. Last year we started a freshman and two sophomores, and now we have a sophomore and two juniors back there. To be quite honest, it is musical chairs back there. We have the talent to do it, it is all about who is going to step up and fill the void."

Louisburg will kick off its season Thursday when it hosts

Tonganoxie at the Wildcat Soccer Complex. The two teams battled to a 0-0 tie to start last season, despite the Wildcats outshooting the Chieftains 34-4.

They hope to get off to a better start this time around.

“I am excited to show the town just how talented this team is and everything that we are bringing,” Avery Barber said. I think it is going to be a good season.”

A season they want to get started with a win.

“Our biggest thing is we need to come out with everything that we have,” Reinhart said. “We can’t let our guard down and we have to give it all we have and pull out a win to start the season.

“We always have higher expectations for ourselves. Our goal is that we make it to state, but we don’t want to just get there, we want to win it. We have some really good underclassmen coming up that will keep our program strong, not only for this year, but for years to come.”

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## **Belcher excited for opportunity at Missouri Southern**





Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher made it official Wednesday when she signed her letter of intent to play soccer at Missouri Southern, a Division Ii program in Joplin, Mo. Belcher has scored 62 goals in her two seasons with the Wildcat program.

When it comes to choosing a college, it can be one of the more stressful decisions in a student athlete's life.

They want to find the right home, the perfect team and the best fit possible. Sometimes, those decisions won't be made until Signing Day approaches.

That wasn't the case for Bailey Belcher.

"I actually made my decision in September so I have been waiting awhile," Belcher said. "I told the coach and he was like well you can't sign until February, which surprised me a little bit. I just wanted to get it out of the way then, but I am glad the time is finally here."

The Louisburg High School senior made it official Wednesday when she signed her letter of intent to play soccer at Missouri Southern, a Division II program in Joplin, Mo. With that signature, Belcher is excited for what her future holds.

"It was a pretty hard decision," Belcher said. "I went to a lot of camps over the summer and a lot of schools started looking at me and giving me offers. It was easy to weed out the ones that didn't have what I needed for school. Then when I narrowed it down, Missouri Southern just had the best offer for me. The class sizes were where I wanted them to be and I feel I have a better chance to play there."

Belcher drew a lot of interest from other programs and for good reason. She has scored 62 goals over the last two seasons for Louisburg, to go along with 16 assists.

She has also earned first team all-Frontier League honors the last two seasons and has also been named to the all-state first team twice during that span.

“Bailey has an incredible work ethic and determination,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “She creates a goal and wants to achieve it. Her hard work and dedication do not just show on the pitch, but the classroom as well. One of her biggest assets is her ability to lead by example. She has her senior season left to play, but it’s nice to see her have her future taken care of.”



Bailey Belcher signed her letter of intent Wednesday to play soccer at Missouri Southern. Seated next to Bailey are her parents Tera Brooks and Jimmy Belcher. Standing (from left) is Louisburg head coach Kyle Conley and assistant coach Michael Pickman.

Missouri Southern, which finished with a 5-9-4 record in 2017, felt like the right fit for Belcher when she made her visit to the campus. Belcher, who also had offers from schools like Rockhurst, saw early on that Southern was the place for her.

“The campus itself is super nice and they have a bunch of new facilities and the people there were just overly nice and I just felt that I could fit in there,” Belcher said. “All the girls in the soccer program were really great as well and they were pretty laid back and very welcoming.

“Both of the coaches seemed to work well with the players better than what I saw with the other schools I visited. They care about what happens to you and want you to be successful no matter what you want to do.”

It became evident to Belcher early on in her life what she wanted to do in college – play soccer.

“I have been playing since third grade,” she said. “I have always liked it and soccer has been my favorite since I was little. I have tried other sports, but it is just not the same. Playing in college has been a dream for me.”

Her passion for the sport was evident the last two seasons with the Louisburg girls program. She has helped the Wildcats to back-to-back regional titles and a fourth-place finish at state last year.

For Belcher, her time with Wildcat team has meant a lot to her and she is looking forward to one final run this spring.

“Honestly it is the best team I have played for,” Belcher said. “Sure, it is not a club team or one that plays in a lot of big tournaments. A lot of the teams up in the city, they are not close. The team we have here is a family and we will do anything for each other. It has always been that way no matter what and that is what I enjoy the most.”

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# OPINION: 2017 was a banner year for Louisburg



Having the opportunity to cover Louisburg High School athletics, for what has been almost 10 years now, I have seen a lot of different highs and lows.

I have been lucky enough to cover state championship teams and watched several athletes perform at the highest level. However, this last year has to be one for the record books when it comes to success at Louisburg High School.

For Wildcat athletics, 2017 was a banner year for many reasons.

Louisburg qualified for the state tournament in three different sports – volleyball, girls soccer and boys basketball – and the first two each placed in the top four.

The volleyball team was just a point away from winning the school's first state title after the Lady Cats finished second to defending state champion Rose Hill, and tied for the best finish in school history.

The Wildcat girls soccer team qualified for the state semifinals in just its second year of existence and suffered a heartbreaking 1-0 loss in the semifinals to eventually take fourth overall.

In boys basketball, the Wildcats qualified for the state tournament for the first time in 12 years despite getting



knocked out in the first round by defending state champion Bishop Miege.

Most schools would love to have that success with their athletic programs, but for Louisburg, that was just the tip of the iceberg. As special as the seasons were for those three programs, the Wildcats also thrived in a few other sports.

Louisburg's cross country program, which has been around for 19 years, had the best season in its history – by far. Not only did the Wildcats have three state medalists for the first time ever, but it had a year that featured the school's first female league champion in Trinity Moore and the best league finish by a male, Wyatt Reece, who took second.

Tim Smith continued the Wildcat success as he became the school's first regional cross country champion, and Moore, Reece and Smith each went on to win a state medal. Moore and Smith also set school records for the fastest time.

The Wildcats also qualified the girls team for the first time in school history as Moore, Carlee Gassman, Reilly Alexander, Isabelle Holtzen, Kaitlyn Lewer, Payton Shaffer and Emily Williams took third at regionals and eventually 10th at state.

The Wildcat wrestling team tied a program best by qualifying eight for the state tournament and came back with a medal by Ryan Adams, who finished sixth.

Louisburg's track and field team persevered and qualified for state in 10 events and had two regional champions in Quinn Rigney and Chris Williams. Isabelle Holtzen and T.J. Dover each brought home their first state track medals.

The boys soccer team was one goal away from making its second consecutive trip to the state semifinals, but their run was halted by a loss to McPherson in state quarterfinals. Still, the Wildcats won a regional title, which was the seventh in team history.

Freshman Calvin Dillon led the Wildcat golf team this past year and recorded the program's first state medal in more than decade as he took 10th overall.

All these things and more I described in detail when releasing my top 10 stories of the year and what a year it was.

Obviously, I haven't had a chance to look through all the results, but I can't imagine a more successful year for LHS when you are talking about athletics. There may have been years in the 70s, 80s and 90s that I don't know about, but I find it hard to imagine one that tops 2017.

Sure, the 2010-11 school year featured two state championship teams in football and boys track and field and that was a fantastic time to be Wildcat, but as far as calendar years go, 2017 was one to remember.

Even outside the sports world, Louisburg High School put together many great accomplishments as the Wildcat Marching Band was selected to participate in the Tournament of Roses Parade and put on a great show for the nation on New Year's Day.

Then in October, the FFA Food Science team of Hallie Hutsell, Faith Seuferling, Addie Katzer and Hattie Harris won a national championship, while Hutsell and Seuferling placed second and third in the nation, respectively.

I don't get a lot of opportunities to cover programs or groups outside the sports world, but these are fantastic accomplishments and deserved to be recognized.

For me, 2017 was a whirlwind. It seemed around every corner, school history was being made and there aren't many schools around the state that can boast about the successes Louisburg has experienced.

It was an honor for me to cover many of these historic runs in

Wildcat history and I hope you all realize how lucky you have it. Louisburg is a school filled with great coaches who care about the student athletes.

Believe me, I know how fortunate I am to be able to be a part of something special and this place is it. If 2018 is half of what 2017 was, it will be a fun ride.

I can't wait for what 2018 has in store and hopefully you all will follow along to see what these Wildcats can accomplish.

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## Top 10 Stories of 2017



It was a successful, and eventful, 2017 for Louisburg High School athletics and for those who are connected to the Wildcat program. This past year created a lot of school history for LHS and several programs brought back state hardware to Louisburg.

Below are the Top 10 stories from 2017, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the explanation is the link to the actual story from the event.

This year was a blast to cover and I was blessed to have the opportunity to go along for the ride with many of these. As much fun as it was, I can't wait for 2018 to begin. Looking forward to it!



**Louisburg's Calvin Dillon earns his first state golf medal as a freshman as he took 10th at the state meet.**

## **10. Dillon medals at state golf**

Louisburg freshman Calvin Dillon certainly didn't play like a first-year varsity player as he led the Wildcat golf team all season. Dillon finished 10<sup>th</sup> at the Class 4A state tournament in Wamego and became the first Wildcat golfer to earn a state medal in several years.

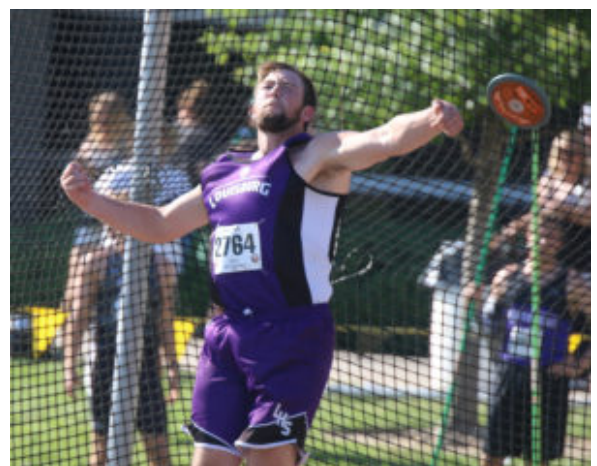
Dillon made the state tournament alongside senior Ty Martin, who finished in 28<sup>th</sup> place overall after he earned his second straight state appearance.





Isabelle Holtzen earned her first state medal in the pole vault as she took seventh back in May.

## 9. Holtzen, Dover earn first state track medals



T.J. Dover finished eighth

**in the discus at the Class  
4A Kansas State Track and  
Field Championships in  
Wichita.**

Junior Isabelle Holtzen and senior T.J. Dover both ended their track and field seasons on a good note as they earned state medals in late May at the Class 4A state meet in Wichita.

Holtzen had a big season in the pole vault as she ended seventh in the state after she cleared 10 feet. Earlier in the year, Holtzen broke a 15-year old school record in the pole vault as she topped 11-1.

Dover made his second consecutive trip to the state meet and finished strong in his final high school performance. He took eighth with a throw of 143-4.

The Wildcats qualified for the state meet in 10 events and had two regional champions in junior Quinn Rigney (100-meter dash) and sophomore Chris Williams (400 dash).



## **8. Frontier League adds three schools, says goodbye to another**

For the Frontier League, 2017 brought a lot of changes to a league that has featured seven schools for the last several years.

Starting in the 2018-19 season, the Frontier League will add three new schools. Piper, Tonganoxie and Bonner Springs each accepted invitations to join the league last April to create a 10-team league.

It is didn't stay 10 teams for long as De Soto will make the move to a different league during the same season. The current league will be made up of nine schools: Louisburg, Paola, Ottawa, Spring Hill, Baldwin, Eudora, Piper, Tonganoxie and Bonner Springs.



## **7. Louisburg boys soccer wins regional crown**

The Louisburg High School boys soccer team was trying to make its second consecutive trip to the state tournament this past season and the Wildcats almost got there.

Although the Wildcats fell to McPherson in the state quarterfinal game in late October, Louisburg put together another successful season that included a 1-0 victory over Independence in the regional championship game.

The Wildcats finished the season with a 13-6 record and earned the school's first Frontier League championship since 2010.





**Junior Ryan Adams celebrates after he earned a state medal at 138 pounds.**

## **6. Wildcat wrestling qualifies eight for state, Adams picks up medal**

The Louisburg High School wrestling team had an historic season as it qualified eight for the Class 4A state wrestling tournament, which tied for the most in school history, during the regional tournament in February at Frontenac High School

Thad Hendrix (106 pounds), Nathan Keegan (120), Kyle Allen (126), Ryan Adams (138), Dylan Meyer (145), Austin Moore (170), Austin Raetzel (195) and Mason Koechner (285) all competed at the state tournament in Salina.

Adams earned the school's lone state medal on the season as he finished sixth overall at 138 pounds.



**Louisburg head football and boys track and field coach Gary Griffin retired from the district after 32 years. It was one of many changes for the LHS athletic department.**

## **5. LHS goes through staff/coaching changes**

The 2017-18 school year looked a lot of different than in previous years for Louisburg High School athletics.

LHS saw a lot of changes in its coaching staff and in the administration as well. Activities director Darin Gagnebin stepped down and was replaced by current director Jeremy Holloway.

In the coaching department, former head and assistant football Gary Griffin retired from the district after 32 years with the high school and Louisburg promoted assistant Robert Ebenstein



as the new Wildcat head football coach.

Jason Nelson resigned his post as the Wildcat head boys basketball coach and he was replaced with Ty Pfannenstiel. Griffin and Greg Darrington also resigned as the boys and girls track and field coaches, and were replaced by Andy Wright (boys) and John Reece (girls).



Louisburg cross country runners (from left) Tim Smith, Trinity Moore and Wyatt Reece each ended the season with a state medal.

#### **4. LHS cross country earns three state medals, qualifies girls team**

The Louisburg High School cross country team might have had

its best season in its 19-year history in 2017.

The Wildcats thrived against some of the state's best competition as seniors Wyatt Reece, Tim Smith and sophomore Trinity Moore all earned state medals at the Class 4A meet in Wamego.

Moore recorded the highest finish for a female runner in school history as she finished fifth in the state and broke her own school record in the process with a time of 19 minutes and 47 seconds.

In the boys race, Reece picked up his first state medal with a time of 17 minutes and finished 11<sup>th</sup> overall. Smith, who won a regional title the week before, came in 15<sup>th</sup> with a time of 17:05. Smith was the first Wildcat to win a regional title in school history.

Louisburg also made history as the Wildcat girls team qualified for the state meet for the first time after they finished third at their regional in Burlington. Moore joined Isabelle Holtzen, Reilly Alexander, Carlee Gassman, Kaitlyn Lewer, Payton Shaffer and Emily Williams to make up the seven-member squad that finished 10<sup>th</sup> in the team standings at state.

Earlier in the year, Moore became the school's first Frontier League champion, while Reece recorded the highest league finish in boys history as he took second at the league meet.



### **3. Louisburg boys basketball earns first state tournament berth in 12 years**

The season may not have started out the way the Louisburg boys basketball team would have liked, but it certainly finished on a positive note.

Louisburg knocked off rival Paola in the sub-state semifinals and then defeated Fort Scott in the championship game in early March to earn its first sub-state championship since 2005.

The Wildcats earned the No. 6 seed and squared off with eventual champion Bishop Miege at the Class 4A state tournament in Salina. The Stags ended the Wildcats' season with an 81-47 loss.





## **2. LHS girls soccer finishes fourth at state tournament**

Louisburg's girls soccer program has only been around for two years, but the Wildcats have set high expectations from the beginning and that continued in 2017.

The Wildcats advanced to the Class 4-1A state semifinals for the first time in school history as they defeated Piper with a 2-1 victory in overtime. This victory came off their second consecutive regional title as they knocked off Bonner Springs.

At the state tournament, Louisburg faced off with Thomas More Prep and suffered a heart-breaking 1-0 loss in the semifinals. The Wildcats moved on to the third-place game against Maize South and eventually finished fourth overall.



## **1. Lady Cat volleyball ends season as state runner-up**

The Louisburg High School volleyball team was just one point away from not only becoming the school's first state volleyball champion – but also the first female team to win a state title in Louisburg history.

As close as the Lady Cats got, they came up just short against defending state champion Rose Hill in late October at the Class 4A-Division I state championship. Louisburg fell 23-25, 25-10 and 29-27 in heartbreaking fashion to finish as the state runner-up.

Still, it was an impressive season for Louisburg volleyball as it finished with a 34-10 record. The Lady Cats reeled off wins over Basehor-Linwood, Bishop Miege and Rose Hill in pool play and then downed Wellington in the state semifinals.

The Lady Cats received several accolades as junior Anna Dixon

and senior Sophie McMullen earned first team all-state and all-league honors. Dixon was also named as the Co-Player of the Year in Class 4A-Division I.

Junior Carson Buffington was also named to the all-state tournament team with Dixon and McMullen.

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## **KSHSAA releases 2017-18 classifications**



The Kansas High School Activities Association released the classifications for the 2017-18 season on Tuesday morning, and for Louisburg High School, much remains the same.

The Wildcats are currently a Class 4A-Division I program with 532 students, but after this season the classification system will change. Class 4A will get rid of the divisions and 4A will have just 36 schools. Louisburg is still expected to be in 4A for the foreseeable future.

However, several schools across the state made classification changes.



September 25, 2017

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The 2017-18 KSHSAA senior high membership is 354 schools. Wichita-Horwell Magnet school is an unaffiliated member school.

School classification changes with enrollment ranges are as follows:  
 (Last year's 2016-2017 classification is shown in parentheses.)

Class	Number of Schools	Range	Schools Changing Class
5A	22	2424 - 1389	Kansas City-VC Harrison (5A)
5A	22	1382 - 910	Kansas City-Whisper (5A) Maize South (4A) Olathe West (4A)
4A	64	791 - 282	Arkansas City (5A) Garden City (5A) Hugoton (5A) Kansas City-Summer Academy (5A) Marysville (5A)
3A	66	280 - 156	Colby (4A) Goodland (4A) Haven (4A) McLouth (4A) North Community (4A)
2A	66	150 - 92	Burlington (1A) Stewart (1A) Jefferson-Highway County (1A) Le Center (1A) Maize (2A) Olathe (1A) Salina-St. John's Military Academy (1A) Syracuse (2A)
1A	97	92 - 20	Atwood-Raytown County (2A) Coffeyville-Fairfax County (2A) Horseman Valley (2A) Kawata-Fortville (2A) St. John's Military Academy (1A) St. Francis (1A) Troy (2A) Troy Falls (2A) Washington County (2A)

**Kansas State High School Activities Association**  
**2017-2018**  
**Classifications and**  
**Enrollments**  
 Enrollment figures as of September 20, 2017  
 based on sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grades.  
 Note: Schools are listed in descending order.

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3A	66	280 - 156	Colby (4A) Goodland (4A) Haven (4A) McLouth (4A) North Community (4A)
2A	66	150 - 92	Burlington (1A) Stewart (1A) Jefferson-Highway County (1A) Le Center (1A) Maize (2A) Olathe (1A) Salina-St. John's Military Academy (1A) Syracuse (2A)
1A	97	92 - 20	Atwood-Raytown County (2A) Coffeyville-Fairfax County (2A) Horseman Valley (2A) Kawata-Fortville (2A) St. John's Military Academy (1A) St. Francis (1A) Troy (2A) Troy Falls (2A) Washington County (2A)

Class	Number of Schools	Range	Schools Changing Class
5A	22	2424 - 1389	Kansas City-VC Harrison (5A)
5A	22	1382 - 910	Kansas City-Whisper (5A) Maize South (4A) Olathe West (4A)
4A	64	791 - 282	Arkansas City (5A) Garden City (5A) Hugoton (5A) Kansas City-Summer Academy (5A) Marysville (5A)
3A	66	280 - 156	Colby (4A) Goodland (4A) Haven (4A) McLouth (4A) North Community (4A)
2A	66	150 - 92	Burlington (1A) Stewart (1A) Jefferson-Highway County (1A) Le Center (1A) Maize (2A) Olathe (1A) Salina-St. John's Military Academy (1A) Syracuse (2A)
1A	97	92 - 20	Atwood-Raytown County (2A) Coffeyville-Fairfax County (2A) Horseman Valley (2A) Kawata-Fortville (2A) St. John's Military Academy (1A) St. Francis (1A) Troy (2A) Troy Falls (2A) Washington County (2A)

Arkansas City and Sumner Academy dropped from Class 5A to 4A for the upcoming season, while Galena, Hugoton and Marysville all moved up to 4A. Maize South jumped from 4A to 5A.

Colby , Goodland, Scott City and Haven all dropped from 4A to 3A schools, while McLouth moved up from 2A to 3A.

**Income Tax**

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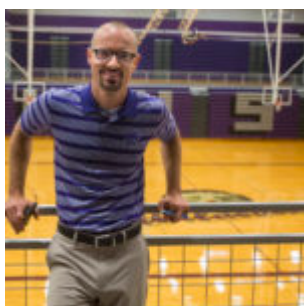
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Hays is currently the largest 4A school with 791 students, followed by Sumner Academy (782), Andover Central (764), Bonner Springs (762) and Arkansas City (757).

Sub-state and regional assignments for the fall season will be released in the coming days.

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# Holloway excited for new role as LHS activities director



Louisburg High School activities director Jeremy Holloway is looking forward to his new position as he starts his 17th year in the USD 416 school district.

Growing up, Jeremy Holloway wasn't one to stay in a place for too long.

Holloway spent most of his childhood and young adult life moving from place to place. He wasn't the type of person who envisioned himself putting down roots.

"I was a constant migrant," Holloway said.

That was until he moved to Louisburg with his wife Megan. Now instead of a migrant, Holloway is deep-rooted in a town he loves.

It made his decision, almost two months ago, an easy one.

Back in June, Holloway was hired as the new Louisburg High School activities director and assistant principal, following the resignation of former activities director Darin Gagnebin. Holloway, who has spent the last 16 years as a teacher at Louisburg Middle School, is ready for the new challenge.



"I am really looking forward to it," Holloway said. "I have been here in Louisburg for 17 years. I never lived anywhere for more than four years in my life until I came to Louisburg. I never knew what it was like to be a part of a community and when I got here I just fell in love with the town. I was excited to become a part of it and Louisburg became important to me. The teaching was great and getting to know all the kids and see them grow up all the way through college was fun. Now I see some of my former students teaching in the building here and it is an amazing feeling. It just felt like home to me."

Fate seemed to step in at the right time for Holloway. He entered the summer still planning to teach history at the middle school, but the dominoes quickly started to fall into place.

Holloway was well on his way to getting his administration degree this past school year as he was planning on holding on to it until something in Louisburg came open. He didn't have to wait long.

"I had to get recertified, so I talked with my wife and I said why get an education masters if it is just going to move me on the pay scale," he said. "Why not get an administration degree to have options? There are other places near here that are looking for people, but that isn't what I want. The only move I would make is to stay in Louisburg. I happened to be down in Eureka Springs on vacation and I got a text in middle of night that Gagnebin had resigned. I had just got my diploma the day before we left. I applied and it turned out well and hopefully it was a good thing."

Louisburg USD 416 superintendent Dr. Brian Biermann had to sift through more than 20 different applicants for the job, but he believes Holloway is going to do great things in the position.

"Jeremy has been a loyal and dedicated teacher and coach in

our community for 17 years,” Dr. Biermann said. “Jeremy possesses many strong leadership attributes that will allow him to be a strong, instructional leader at Louisburg High School. He is passionate about education, has a strong work ethic and is committed to our community.

“Jeremy is all about building positive relationships with students, staff and the community. For 17 years he has been building these relationships. Now, he will be able to build upon his unique skill set in a leadership position in our district. I am excited to see the great things Mr. Holloway can contribute to our district and community in this new role.”

One of the first things Holloway wanted to do was to get to know his new coaching staff. Several new coaches were hired this past school year and he wanted to see what they were all about.

“I just want them to feel comfortable with me and let them understand that I am approachable,” Holloway said. “That relationship piece is huge. I am getting to know where they are from, how many kids they have and I want them to feel comfortable coming to me. We do lose some great experience, but we have gained some capable coaches and a lot of enthusiasm. I just want to be a positive impact for them.”

Since he started officially on July 24, Holloway has been hard at work in several different areas, but one of the bigger things going on now is the shuffling of the Frontier League.

The league, which will be at seven schools this year, will move up to nine starting for the 2018-19 school year. Bonner Springs, Tonganoxie and Piper will join the league, while De Soto will depart.

Baldwin, an original league member, is concerned the school will move down to Class 3A starting in 2018-19, thanks to changes in the classification system. If it happens, it will

create scheduling conflicts for football.

"The biggest conflict right now is Baldwin is right on the edge of becoming 3A and they think it will happen," Holloway said. "If Baldwin is in our league, which is what we plan on, they are required to play five district games for football, which only leaves them three league games. If only three league teams play Baldwin, then the rest of the league teams have to find another team to play. I have schools from Lansing, Independence, Coffeyville, Chanute and other schools calling me trying to lock up games. There are so many different scenarios so we just have to wait and see. That is one thing that I am really working on right now."

With the activity season fast approaching, Holloway is excited for everything to get underway. He is also looking forward to getting to know the fan base more.

"I have always been highly impressed of Louisburg and the support of its teams and the turnout we will get, especially for football games," Holloway said. "I encourage Louisburg to continue the tradition of being a class act. I think that every town has its own culture and a lot of it starts with the coaches. If your coaches are harassing refs, your players are probably going to start to learn that they can do that and that will trickle down to the parents and crowd. Without pointing fingers, there are certain places where that is the climate. I think Louisburg has been great. There are always going to be situations, but I would encourage fans and parents to support our coaches and let them coach."

"I am looking forward to an exciting year. We have great coaches, that are experienced and they are very innovative. They are organized and they all seem truly excited about what is going on. The community can rest assured that the coaches that are in place right now have the best interest of the kids and the programs."

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# Five Wildcats named to all-state girls soccer team



Louisburg's Bailey Belcher was one of five Wildcats to be named to the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association all-state team Thursday. Belcher earned first team honors for the second consecutive year.

It may have taken a little longer for the all-state girls soccer team honors to be released, but for Louisburg, it was well worth the wait.

The Kansas Soccer Coaches Association unveiled their all-state team Thursday and the Wildcats were well-represented. Louisburg earned five spots on the Class 4-1A squad, including three on the first team.

Bailey Belcher, Mackenzie Scholtz and goalie Shay Whiting were each named to the first team, while Madisen Simpson and Camdyn Clark were selected to the second team.

The Wildcats are coming off a special 2017 campaign as they reached the Class 4-1A state tournament and finished fourth overall in just their second year as a program.

"These young ladies had terrific season and it is a fantastic

honor to receive this acknowledgment from coaches around the state,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “This is just another reason that solidifies how special our program is. The girls that are members of the soccer team are doing big things here in Louisburg and I couldn’t be more proud of these young ladies.

“Also, none of these individual awards could not be possible without their teammates pushing them and then supporting each other throughout the season. Well done ladies and next year can’t get here fast enough.”



Mackenzie Scholtz, first team, forward



Shay Whiting, first team, goalie





Madisen Simpson, second team, midfield



Camdyn Clark, second team, defense

Belcher was selected as a first-team midfielder as she finished the season with 29 goals and 12 assists on the season as a junior. As for Scholtz, she finished her freshman season with 27 goals and a team-high 18 assists to earn a first-team spot as a forward.

In goal, Whiting also had a big year for the Wildcats as she finished the season with nine shutouts.

As for Simpson, she earned her second-team midfield honor as she was responsible for marking some of the opposition's best players and also had a goal and six assists.

Clark was also one of the Wildcats' top defenders as an outside back and made it tough on the opposition.

It is the second straight season that Belcher, Whiting and Clark earned all-state honors.

## **First team**

Forward–Kayla Crowder, sr., Maranatha Academy; Gaby Crowell, jr., Maize South; Aislinn Hughes, jr., McPherson; **Mackenzie Scholtz, fr., Louisburg**; Berkley Sharp, sr., Basehor-Linwood; Sophia Stram, fr., Bishop Miege; Kayla Vitztum, jr., Thomas More Prep.

Midfielder–Evelyn Alejandre-Olivas, so., Bishop Miege; **Bailey Belcher, jr., Louisburg**; Hayden Burnett, sr., Maize South; Ally Henderson, sr., Trinity Academy; Paige Ledesma, sr., Maize South; Lanie Mannebach, jr., Bishop Miege; Alayna Wallace, sr., McPherson.

Defender–Avery Green, sr., Maize South; Laiken Hein, jr., McPherson; Avery Higgerson, so., Bishop Miege; Megan Homoly, jr., Bishop Miege; Mariah Moore, sr., Maize South; Fallon Russell, so., Bishop Miege.

Goalkeeper–Deonna Wellbrock, sr., Thomas More Prep; **Shay Whiting, jr., Louisburg**.

Offensive Player of the Year–Sophia Stram, fr., Bishop Miege.

Defensive Player of the Year–Megan Homoly, jr., Bishop Miege.

Goalkeeper of the Year–Deonna Wellbrock, sr., Thomas More Prep.

Coach of the Year–Nate Huppe, Bishop Miege.

## **Second team**

Forward–Brooklyn Barclay, sr., Trinity Academy; Anna Burnett, fr., Baldwin; Kaylen Dawson, sr., Spring Hill; Claire Hedlund, fr., McPherson; Ashley Ostrander, jr., Thomas More Prep; Patrica Thomas, jr., KC Piper; Anna Watson, jr., Spring Hill.

Midfielder–Mallory Borgan, jr., Maranatha Academy; Caitlin Countryman, so., Baldwin; Aubrey Koenigsman, jr., Thomas More

Prep; Megan Koenigsman, sr., Thomas More Prep; Gabrielle Rodriguez, jr., KC Piper; **Madisen Simpson, sr., Louisburg**; Mallory Smith, so., Spring Hill; Ana Waren, sr., Maize South; Emily Wilson, jr., KC Piper.

Defender–Josie Boyle, fr., Baldwin; **Camdyn Clark, so., Louisburg**; Heidi Myers, sr., McPherson; Lauren Snodgrass, sr., Trinity Academy; Kassidy Wackerly, sr., Andover Central; Sara Watson, jr., Spring Hill.

Goalkeeper–Anita Eckhardt, fr., Maranatha Academy.

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## **Opinion: Time to look back and enjoy successes**



The Louisburg High School football team was one of many bright spots for LHS athletics this past school year.

We live in a world where, especially in sports, we often don't take time to reflect on our accomplishments – and instead we are in a rush to move on to the next set of obstacles.

In reality, we are in a “what have you done for me lately” society and sometimes don't remember, or enjoy, those special moments where our hard work has paid off.

Yes, I understand you don't want to relish in those accomplishments as that doesn't make you a better athlete, or whatever your specialty may be, but not taking the time to enjoy the ride can be detrimental.

And what a ride it was for Louisburg High School athletics this past season.

The Wildcats had a special year in several sports, and before we focus on the 2017-18 campaign, we should look back at what the 16-17 season brought us. Just take a look at what these Wildcats accomplished.

- There is probably no better place to start than the Louisburg soccer teams. Both the boys and girls teams earned spots in the state semifinals for the first time in program history and both finished fourth. The boys team made it to state for the first time in their 14 years, while the girls advanced to the state tournament in just their second season.

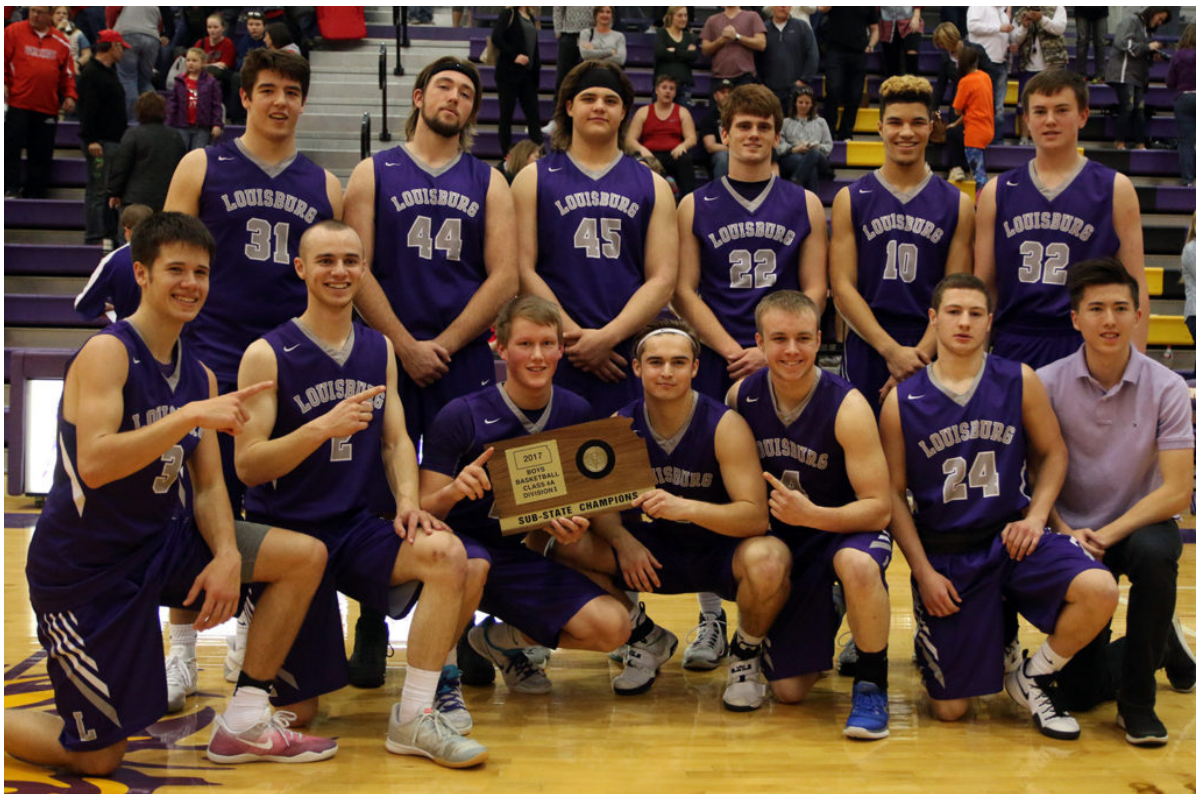


**The Louisburg High School girls soccer team finished**



**fourth in the state in just their second season. The Wildcat boys also finished fourth as they advanced to the state semifinals for the first time in program history.**

- It was quite the season for the Wildcat boys basketball team as they advanced to the state tournament for the first time since 2005. Louisburg won its sub-state tournament with a 64-52 win over Fort Scott in the championship game.



**The Louisburg boys basketball team qualified for state for the first time since 2005.**

- The Louisburg football team made quite the run in the 2016 season. The Wildcats won their first playoff game since 2012 and earned a regional title in the process with a win over Independence. Even though their season came to an end in the next round to eventual state champion Bishop Miege, the Wildcats' still finished with an 8-3 record.
- Wrestling had another big season as the Wildcats



qualified eight for the Class 4A state tournament in Salina. Although Ryan Adams was the lone state medalist, as he finished sixth overall at 138 pounds, the Wildcats tied a school record for number of state qualifiers that was set back in 1984.

- In cross country, the Wildcats sent three runners to the state meet and had their first state medalist since 2006 when freshman Trinity Moore finished 19th overall, as she, Wyatt Reece and Tim Smith competed at the Wamego meet. Moore was also the school's first female runner to earn a state medal.
- Freshman golfer Calvin Dillon became the Wildcats' first state medalist in several years as he finished 10th at the Class 4A state tournament and was one of two Wildcats, along with Ty Martin, to qualify for state. Dillon could quite possibly be the first freshman golfer in school history to get a medal, but since golf stats aren't quite as well kept, it is hard to tell for sure.
- T.J. Dover and Isabelle Holtzen came through with state medals of their own following the state track meet. Holtzen finished seventh at the Class 4A meet in the pole vault and Dover was eighth in the discus as both medaled for the first time. Holtzen also broke the school record in the pole vault earlier in the season after she cleared 11 feet, 1 inch.
- The girls basketball and softball teams both had big improvements from a season ago as they each reached 10 wins despite falling in the first round of their sub-state and regional tournaments. Softball doubled their win total from 2016, while the girls basketball team improved by seven victories.
- The Louisburg volleyball team advanced to the sub-state championship game against rival Paola and was just a few points away from advancing to its fifth consecutive state tournament. The Lady Cats also finished the season with 23 victories.

Most schools across the state would love to have the kind of success Louisburg experienced this year and to me that doesn't seem like it is talked about enough.

Sometimes we get caught up in losses or not meeting expectations, when in fact, compared to a lot of schools, Louisburg exceeds expectations – at least it does mine.

Could these programs be better? Sure they could and the coaches would be the first to tell you. At the same time, we all need to take a step back, look at the big picture and enjoy the success we have.

To me, Louisburg athletics is as healthy as it has been in a long time.

A lot has been made about all the coaches that have left recently. Louisburg will have four new head coaches this upcoming school year and several new assistants.

Some people have considered this a mass exodus due problems at the school. It couldn't be further from the truth. A lot of it is just coincidence. For some it was retirement, others wanted to spend more time with family and a few more just wanted a change.

Former activities director Darin Gagenbin left to be closer to his family and work in the town where he lives. I know all about how great of an opportunity that is and it is the same thing I did almost 10 years ago when I moved here with my family. Working in the town you live in is something you can't put a value on.

Louisburg found a great replacement in Jeremy Holloway, who has been with the district for 17 years and is invested in the community. The school has also brought in a lot of new, young coaches that have come in with excitement and new ideas.

It is bittersweet for me as a lot of those coaches I had a

chance to get to know really well are now gone. Although I am mainly a solo operation, I consider a lot them my co-workers and it stinks to see them move on, but I also know they are doing the best for themselves and their families.

The same could be said for the class of 2017. The group of seniors I worked with this past year were great to get to know, just like all the senior classes before them.

I appreciated all their support and what I do could not be done without those kids. It is great to see them grow up and watch them become successful outside the classroom. I am not a teacher or coach, but still appreciate all they accomplish.

With 2016-17 in the rear view mirror, it will soon be time to focus on the upcoming season and I couldn't be more excited to see what accomplishments this group of Wildcats have in store. It has all the makings of a fun and special year.

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## **Gagnebin steps down as LHS activities director**



Louisburg High School activities director Darin Gagnebin presents the Wildcat girls soccer team with their regional championship trophy last month. Gagnebin resigned his post

**earlier this month to take a similar position in Paola.**

Darin Gagnebin has a fondness for Louisburg High School, his coaches and students.

That made it all the more hard to say goodbye.

Gagnebin resigned his post as LHS assistant principal and activities director earlier this month to tentatively take the same position at Paola High School. His last day in Louisburg was last week.

Gagnebin spent a total of 17 years in the Louisburg school district, with the last six spent as activities director. He was also a teacher and coach for 11 years.

Family was the biggest reason he decided to make the move. Gagnebin and his family currently reside in Paola and his two children attend schools in Paola.

"People have come and gone, but it is still family here," Gagnebin said. "I am comfortable here and Louisburg has done a lot for me. I just can't pass up an opportunity to be where my kids are at. I know I could have brought my kids here, but my wife and I made that decision a long time ago of where we were going to live because of where she taught and I taught. I never thought back when we first moved to Paola and when we had kids, that we would be in this position."

It was a difficult decision for Gagnebin as he leaves behind a group of coaches, several of whom he recently hired. The Louisburg district had a number of new coaches come on board for the upcoming school year.

"We have gone through some trials in the last couple of years and that is with any school," Gagnebin said. "I told my wife, that if this was going to happen the way it did and I could pick the time, I wish the timing would have happened two years



down the road. I would have loved to see what this young group of teachers and coaches are going to do coming in.

"I told my wife that I was really excited about coming back next year and I felt we made some good hires. We have a passionate coaching staff coming on and they are great people with new ideas. It just happened out of the blue."

The opening came when former Paola High School principal Phil Bressler took the new principal job at Pittsburg High School. Paola assistant principal and activities director Jeff Hines was elevated to the Paola principal position, which left the Panthers needing an activities director.

It can be traced back even further when the Pittsburg High School journalism class wrote an investigative piece that ousted its newly hired principal, which forced the school to reopen the position and eventually hired Bressler.

"Had Pittsburg's journalism class not done their job, we wouldn't be sitting here talking right now," Gagnebin said.

The Paola position was an opportunity Gagnebin just couldn't pass up as he will have an opportunity to watch more of his children's events and work closer to home.

"I have missed a lot of my own kids' stuff," he said. "But the people here have been really great, (Principal) Tammy (Thomasson) now and Dave (Tappan) before her, to let me try to get to as much stuff as I can. I still miss things. These opportunities don't come around very often and I just figured this would be a great fit for me and my family.

"But I couldn't ask for a better group of coaches here in Louisburg. They are good and passionate about what they do. I really have developed some good bonds over the years. I know some have left and some have stayed on, but the coaches and staff I have had has been great."