

# Wildcats record road shutout of Ottawa



***Louisburg senior Lola Edwards beats a defender to the ball during a match earlier this season.***

OTTAWA – The injury bug has caught up with the Louisburg girls soccer team as the Wildcats currently have several players dealing with bumps and bruises, which isn't ideal for a team that isn't very deep.

Despite that, Louisburg has won four of its last five matches and one of those came Tuesday on the road as the Wildcats shutout Ottawa, 3-0.

It wasn't the prettiest of performances according to head coach Ben York, but he was pleased to see his team battle

through some adversity.

“We played a little uninspired at times, but I don’t want to take away from the win as they are all important this time of year,” York said. “We probably had 80 percent of possession but we didn’t finish a lot of chances.

“We are battling through some stuff physically and we aren’t really deep. We had some girls that came in the game that gave us some good minutes. Every team has stuff going on at this point in the year, but we want to be trending upward toward the end of the season and this win helped with that.”

Louisburg got on the board early as senior Lexi Hampton put the Wildcats up 1-0 in the first half. Junior Baileigh Johnson followed with another goal and the Wildcats led 2-0 at halftime.

Junior Rowan Yows sealed the win in the second half with her first goal of the match and the Wildcats improved their record to 8-2-1 on the season, which is the best on the East side of Class 4-1A.

“We had a ton of shots,” York said. “Ottawa just packed it in and made it hard for us to score at times. We just tried to go through the defense instead of taking some shots from distance. We need to be more patient, but it is tough when the defense just packs it in on you.”

Louisburg’s defense played well as goalie Macy Lemke earned the clean sheet, while senior Hailey Sword was active in the back to lead the Wildcat defense.

The Wildcats will try and make it two straight wins tonight as they host Eudora in a Frontier League match. Start time is set for 6 p.m. at Wildcat Stadium.

“Definitely not disappointed with this win, but I want to see us on the uptick and accelerating toward the end of the

season,” York said. “Eudora is going to be a competitive game for us, we have to come to play.”

## **Wildcats tie Augusta, roll Chanute**

Last week had its ups and downs for Louisburg, but after it all, the Wildcats avoided the loss column.

Louisburg earned a 0-0 tie against Augusta last Friday in Emporia, but recorded a 9-0 victory at Chanute on April 16.

Against Chanute, Baileigh Johnson, Lexi Hampton and Rowan Yows each scored two goals. Mena Fercho also found the back of the net, while Faith Sewell and Lila Edwards each scored their first varsity goal.

“It was really good,” York said. “One of the things I have been about, is we really share the load on who gets the scoring. How we approach the game is, if we are doing it properly, is about being unselfish and kids are just as interested in assists as goals. We got Macy some time outside of the goal and that was cool too.”

The Wildcats battled injuries against Augusta as Hampton, Yows and Fercho all had to leave the match at one time, but neither team could score in regulation or the two overtimes periods.

“We were the better skilled team and they were more disciplined and physical,” York said of Augusta. There was a lot of pulling and grabbing and that wore us down pretty good. We weren’t at full strength. Hailey played a really good game in the back and Macy made some really good saves too that kept the game scoreless.”

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# Wildcats shutout Baldwin to get league road win



***Louisburg senior Lexi Hampton heads a shot toward the goal Thursday against Baldwin.***

BALDWIN CITY – Prior to the season, the Louisburg girls soccer team had two games circled on its schedule.

They were league games against Spring Hill and Baldwin – a pair of teams the Wildcats have struggled with in recent years. Louisburg wanted to exact some revenge.

Despite falling in an overtime match to Spring Hill earlier in the year, the Wildcats got the win they were looking for on a windy Thursday in Baldwin City.

Louisburg scored a pair of goals within minutes of each other in the second half and the Wildcats left with a 2-0 victory over the Bulldogs. It was also the second straight win for

Louisburg as the Wildcats are now 6-2 on the season.

“One of the goals we made for this group was that when we play teams that we have not done well against in the past, is we want to change that narrative,” Louisburg coach Ben York said. “The two teams we circled before the season was Spring Hill and Baldwin. They are two in league teams and we haven’t had the best success against them lately. We did a good job against Spring Hill, and it was a game we should have won.

“The girls showed a lot of fight and determination against Baldwin. We had girls who were sick, some girls that were banged up and we need some time off. We are shallow in our substitutions right now. It was really good for the girls to get this win. They put a lot of effort and fight into this.”

The Wildcats controlled possession in the first half as they battled gusty wind conditions, but couldn’t find the back of the net.

Baldwin turned the tides after halftime as it used the wind to create several opportunities, but the back line of Jaden Bentz, Hailey Sword, Faith Sewell and Lila Edwards turned away several chances.

Louisburg goalie Macy Lemke, who also earned the clean sheet, corralled several saves to keep the match scoreless.



***Louisburg defender Faith Sewell tries to clear the ball away from a Baldwin player Thursday on the road.***

Then, midway through the second half, the Wildcat attack got going.

Junior midfielder Rowan Yows got a through ball down the left side. She sent a cross into the box and it found the foot of freshman Ellia Gibbons, who scored her first varsity goal to put the Wildcats up one.

Just a few minutes later, the Wildcats used the same play in their favor. Yows got a ball down the left side, crossed the ball in, and senior Lexi Hampton found the back of the net to make it 2-0.

Yows, who battled an injury throughout the match, found a little extra as she made two of the bigger passes in the match.

“When Rowan was off the field, I decided to play her more out

wide and away from the middle of the field and all the tackles,” York said. “She got a couple balls played through and she has a great left foot cross. It put the goalie in a bad situation with both of them in the wind.

“At the time we weren’t in control of what was happening, and then all of sudden we made some plays and that is what good teams do. Was very pleased we faced adversity and really stuck with it and happy they got the result they wanted.”

Louisburg was battling illness and injury throughout the match and it left the Wildcats’ bench razor thin against one of the better teams in the league. Gibbons and Rylee Moore gave the Wildcats some much need minutes in the win.

“Our subs that come on for us right now, Rylee and Ellia, are really critical for us right now,” York said. “Right now, we are really only two deep and would like to have a couple more and hopefully we can expand our bench a little bit. Rylee did a good job and Ellia played a great game.”

The Wildcats will try and make it three straight wins as they travel for a non-league contest at Chanute. Varsity is slated to begin at 6 p.m.

## **Louisburg blanks Tonganoxie.**

Louisburg traveled to square off with Tonganoxie on April 9 in hopes of snapping a two-match losing skid.

The Wildcats did just that as they shutout the Chieftains, 4-0, to improve in the Frontier League standings and got back on the winning track.

Senior Lexi Hampton scored a pair of goals to lead the Louisburg attack, while sophomore Mena Fercho and senior Hailey Sword also found the back of the net.

Louisburg senior Macy Lemke earned the clean sheet as the

Wildcats picked up the road shutout.

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## Wildcats fall in overtime to Spring Hill in back-and-forth match



*Louisburg junior Baileigh Johnson passes the ball off to a teammate Thursday at home against Spring Hill.*

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Louisburg girls soccer team wanted to see how it st



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It has been a few years since the Wildcats came away with a

win over the Broncos and they were hoping this time would be different.

For most of the match, Louisburg answered Spring Hill at every turn during its Thursday home game and eventually forced overtime.

Unfortunately for the Wildcats, Spring Hill had a little more left in the tank as the Broncos scored late in the first overtime period and handed Louisburg a 3-2 setback.

“It was just a middle of the season game, but the girls really built this one up, especially after they beat us pretty good last year,” Louisburg coach Ben York said. “This group of seniors have never beaten Spring Hill. One of our goals was to be competitive against good teams and we definitely were. We are still working on getting in better shape and that will come with time. It would have been a pretty big victory, but it was a super competitive game.”

Spring Hill scored first midway through the first half to take the early lead, but the Wildcats were able to respond late in the half and get some momentum going into halftime.



***Louisburg junior Jaden Bentz stands up a Spring Hill player Thursday.***

With about minute remaining, Louisburg junior Rowan Yows took a quick shot from about 25 yards out to even the match at 1-all. The shot sailed over the keepers head and into the corner of the net.

“We have been taking shots all season like that and I want the girls to take those opportunities,” York said. “I encourage our girls to take shots from distance and quick shots that were just like that. She, Hailey (Sword), Lola (Edwards) and Lexi (Hampton) are all capable of hitting shots like that. It was a really nice shot from Rowan.”

Fifteen minutes into the second half, Spring Hill took the lead again on a shot just inside the 18 that found the corner of the net.

It didn't take long for the Wildcats to respond as senior Lexi Hampton scored two minutes later to tie it at 2-all. It stayed that way until the overtime period.

"We fought back every time Spring Hill scored and I am proud of them for that," York said. "That is what I tried to emphasize the girls all season. Last year once a team scored, we couldn't find ways to make things happen. We had an answer at two different times in the game to come back from being down. We talk about not getting too up or too down and just riding that wave and the girls showed a good attitude and a lot of fight."

The Wildcat defense put together a strong showing all night as the back line of Hailey Sword, Jaden Bentz, Lila Edwards and Faith Sewell limited Spring Hill's shots on goal.

However, Louisburg had a bit of tired legs as Spring Hill controlled the final 10 minutes of regulation and overtime before getting the game-winning score.

Although the Wildcats have now suffered back-to-back losses, they will try and get back on track today as they travel to Tonganoxie for a Frontier League matchup.

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## **Wildcats shutout Turner to advance to title match**



***Louisburg junior Riley May scored one of the team's five goals Wednesday in the Wildcats' win over Turner.***

KANSAS CITY, Kan. – Offense wasn't a problem in its first two games of the Turner Invitational as Louisburg won back-to-back matches to earn a spot in the championship game.

The Wildcats' latest win came Wednesday in the semifinals as Louisburg scored four second half goals en route to a 5-0 win over Turner. Five different players scored for Louisburg in what was a balanced effort.

"Fitness wise we are good, but we were coming off a game the night before, and we were a little tired, but we played good defense," Louisburg coach Ben York said. "We struggled a little offensively, but once we got in after a halftime, we figured some things out and it got a lot better. We worked the ball around and played a more possession game and it opened up and we had a lot more opportunities in the second half."

Louisburg (4-0) opened with a goal less than two minutes into

the contest, but Turner packed its defense in around the goal and the Wildcats struggled to get good looks.

That all changed in the second half as the Wildcats scored four times to pull away for the victory. Louisburg was also strong defensively as senior goalie Macy Lemke earned the clean sheet.

Several different players got in the scoring column for Louisburg as Lexi Hampton, Bailiegh Johnson, Rowan Yows, Mena Fercho and Riley May each found the back of the net.

“A lot of people had chances and everyone was getting shots,” York said. “We need to work on our shots from the outside, but it was good to see everyone get involved and I thought the girls played well, especially in the second half.”

It was the second game in two days for Louisburg as the Wildcats opened the tournament Tuesday with a 7-1 victory over Sumner Academy. The Wildcats got a big game from Hampton as she finished with four goals.

Johnson added two goals in the victory and senior Hailey Sword added another. Louisburg jumped out to a 2-0 halftime lead and scored five more times in the second half.

“Sumner got after it and made it an open game,” York said. “We just couldn’t make that final pass to our forwards in the first half. Once we figured that out in the second half, we played a lot better. We got in behind several times and the goals looked easy. It took awhile to get going and that will be what this team is for a little bit.”

Louisburg is now in the championship match as the Wildcats will face off with Shawnee Mission North at 6:30 p.m. on Friday at Turner High School.

“They are very excited about it,” York said of his team playing in the championship. “Some of the younger girls don’t

get the gravity of it yet, but this has like a postseason feeling with it being a championship game. I think that will amp the girls up a little and hopefully we can play strong and physical because North is a very good team.”

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## **Wildcats win second straight as they down Leavenworth in home opener**



***Louisburg's Baileigh Johnson celebrates with her teammates after scoring her first of two goals Thursday at home against Leavenworth.***

It is two matches and two wins for the Louisburg girls soccer

team to begin its season and its latest victory came Thursday against Leavenworth in the Wildcats' hope opener.

The Wildcats scored a pair of goals and came away with a 2-1 victory over the Pioneers. Although it wasn't the cleanest of matches, the improvements were definitely there from game one to game two.

"I saw lots of progress," Louisburg coach Ben York said. "We are pretty fit right now and most of them played the entire game. We are having some difficulty in getting our forwards involved, but those are all things that time will fix as we move forward and get more comfortable with each other."

Louisburg (2-0) got things going late in the first half offensively. Senior Lola Edwards brought the ball up through the midfield and found an open Baileigh Johnson.

Johnson sprinted down the right side, and after a pass from Edwards, Johnson shot the ball over the goalie's outstretched arms and found the back of the net to give the Wildcats the lead.

Early in the second half, Johnson found the back of the net again. Senior Hailey Sword pushed the ball up the field and found Johnson.

The Louisburg junior took a shot just outside the box and put the Wildcats up, 2-0, less than two minutes into the second half. It was Johnson's first two goals of the season.

"Baileigh has made a huge improvement and feels more comfortable in what she is doing," York said. "She killed it at the JV level last year and came up with varsity to play some big minutes at times. She is confident this year and I think she is the most improved player we have right now."





***Louisburg sophomore Mena Fercho settles a pass Thursday against Leavenworth.***

Leavenworth broke the shutout a few minutes later, but the Wildcats dominated possession from start to finish.

“We are still learning and it is a new group with new faces,” York said. “I am giving them some freedom to work some things out in the back. I want them to get better. It is another game where if we play marginally to our strengths, we might win going away.

“I’m happy with where half of our players are right now. I am gettin what I am expecting out of them and the other half is moving toward that. We have things we want to fix, but that is going to take time. We could be 0-2, and I would still be confident with where we are heading. The wins are good though and that builds confidence. This upcoming week will be a long week, but the most important thing is we need to stay healthy.”

The Wildcats will try for their third straight win tonight as they square off with Sumner Academy in the first round of the Turner Invitational. The match is slated to begin at 6:30 p.m.

If the Wildcats get a victory, they will play the winner between Turner and Bonner Springs on Wednesday. The final game of the tournament will take place Friday.

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## **Wildcats outlast Lansing to get overtime win in opener**



LANSING – As the clock hit zero at the end of regulation, neither Louisburg or Lansing knew who had won.

The Wildcats were up a goal as the buzzer sounded, but Lansing found the back of the net on a wild play that appeared to have bounced off the hand of a Lion player before the shot.

The officials conferred and allowed the goal, which forced overtime. Instead of letting frustration take over, the Wildcats put it to good use.

Sophomore Mena Fercho scored the game-winning goal six minutes into the extra period and gave Louisburg a big 2-1 victory over Lansing on Tuesday in its season opener.

“This was definitely a good win for us,” Louisburg coach Ben York said. “We focused on mental toughness in the offseason and it was good to see us refocus and not let a call, or a goal get us down. The girls did a good job of moving on and really thought we did a lot of good things.”

Louisburg took an early one goal lead in the first half on a goal from senior Lexi Hampton and the Wildcats held that lead all the way to the final seconds of the second half.

It was there where Lansing pushed the ball up the field, and after a strong save from goalie Macy Lemke, a deflection went to a Lansing player near the net and scored as time expired.

It was a war of attrition for both teams as they had to deal with a fast-paced match, but it was one the Wildcats were prepared for.

“Both teams had players that were dropping like flies,” York said. “Last 10 minutes of the second half, there were players from both teams who had to leave with cramps. We didn’t sub a whole lot, but we did a ton of extra conditioning to make ourselves ready. The conditioning really helped us out and we were the stronger team later in the game.”

Fercho won the game for the Wildcats as she dribbled into the box, battled through two Lansing defenders, then dribbled the ball past the goalie for the open net opportunity.

“Mena did a great job to stay with it and was great to see her come through there,” York said. “It was good to see the girls refocus in the overtime and they played well.

“We shouldn’t have put the game in the hands of the referee, and I think we know that. We could have done things where we weren’t in that position, but we had the chance to put the game away before then in regulation and we just didn’t. Good learning experience for sure.”

Louisburg will try for back to back wins today as it hosts Leavenworth in its home opener. Varsity is slated to begin at 6 p.m.

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## **Louisburg girls soccer ready to make another run at state tourney**



***Louisburg senior Lexi Hampton returns to help lead the Wildcat attack after scoring 19 goals last season.***

The Louisburg girls soccer team found itself just one win away from the state tournament last season.

Unfortunately, the Wildcats had a big road block in their way in eventual state champion Bishop Miege. Despite the loss to the Stags in the regional championship game, Louisburg finished with a strong 13-5 record on the season.

After a memorable run in 2023, many of those same Wildcats are back once again as they try to earn a spot in the state tournament.

The Wildcats return five all-league performers from last season that are included in their seven returning starters. It is a veteran group that has high goals for themselves.

Louisburg is led by seven seniors, including returning starters Macy Lemke, Lexi Hampton, Hailey Sword, Lola Edwards and Ellery Allen. Aliya Klugman and A.J. Fire will also see playing time throughout the year.

“When it comes to leadership, this group has a good handle on it,” Louisburg coach Ben York said of his seniors. “They are a little more serious than some, but they know what they want to try and do. They work really hard. Macy is a 2-year starter, Lexi has started since she walked on the field was a freshman, Hailey has played a lot, as has Lola.

“There are a lot of leaders in that group and this will be one of those classes that is very easy to coach and they don’t need any extra motivation from me. They will be looked up to by a lot of younger players.”

Although the season hasn’t even started, the injury bug has hit the Wildcats. Allen, who was an honorable mention all-state defender from a year ago, will be out most of the season.

It forced York to shuffle his lineup, but he believes his team can overcome not having her on the pitch.

“There is a small chance that she could join us at the end, but I am pretty heartbroken for her as this is her senior year,” York said. “The best thing is to make sure she is still healthy and we are thinking of her. We have a good cohesiveness from last year’s team. We have some eager young people wanting to get in and prove they can contribute.”



***Louisburg junior Rowan Yows is one of the top returning goalscorers for the Wildcats after scoring 19 last season.***

The strength of the Wildcat team is up top as they present plenty of firepower, including Hampton and junior Rowan Yows. Hampton, the team's starting forward, returns after scoring a team-high 19 goals and seven assists.

Yows, who was a first-team all-league midfielder a year ago, also had 19 goals and also finished with 11 assists. Louisburg will lean on that 1-2 punch throughout the season.

Junior Baileigh Johnson will start at forward along with Hampton, while Edwards, sophomore Mena Fercho and junior Riley May will start in the midfield.

On defense, Sword will lead the back line after earning second team all-league last season. She will be joined by junior Jaden Bentz, who started last season on the outside.

Sophomores Faith Sewell and Lila Edwards will also start on defense.

Lemke returns for her second year in goal for Louisburg after earning all-league honors last season. She finished with 56 saves and nine clean sheets.



***Louisburg senior Hailey Sword will be one of the team leaders in the back this season for the Wildcats after earning all-league honors a year ago.***

“We are going to play a little different this year defensively as we are going to play flat in the back with two center backs and see how that goes,” York said. “I think it gives everyone a little more flexibility. That is the main goal. We had plans to move Hailey to the midfield, but with Ellery’s injury that is how we are going to start. There will be time where Lola could play back there as well.”



The Wildcats have set goals for themselves this season, but right now they are more concerned with the present as they prepare for their season opener today at Lansing.

“I don’t want to set an expectation at the beginning of the season, other than just being physically fit and mentally stronger,” York said. “Those two things were key factors and everyone identified with those after last season. I don’t like to have a goal that it is regional championship or state or bust. Our goal is it to be better tomorrow than we are today.

“No question we have talent on this team, but this is a new year and we need to see how is this team going to work together and getting a starting 11 that works for us. It is a mature group, but will just have to wait to see how it goes. We have team goals that we want, so hopefully we can accomplish some of those.”

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**Lemke excited to join  
Coffeyville Community College  
soccer program**



***Louisburg senior Macy Lemke recently signed her letter of intent to join the Coffeyville Community College soccer program this fall.***

Ever since she started playing soccer in elementary school, Macy Lemke always found herself in the net.

Lemke was always taller than most of the players, so her coaches put her where she could help the team most – in goal. Little did she know, more than a decade later, Lemke will be competing for a starting goalie spot on the collegiate level.

The Louisburg senior signed her letter of intent to join the Coffeyville Community College program and will compete for the Red Ravens this coming fall.

“It feels very weird but very awesome all together,” Lemke said. “I remember first playing indoor soccer and being chosen to be a goalie because I was tall. Little did I know, I am

here graduating in a semester going to play soccer in college with the 'Big Kids.'

"But really it's incredible to start so little and end up somewhere so big. My first grade self would think that's insane. I'm speechless, but I'm just living in the moment and it's truly a beautiful thing to be where I am now."

A lot of things have laid out perfectly for Lemke, that includes the opportunity to join the Louisburg soccer program. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, she was preparing to enroll at Olathe South.

It was a scary, and uncertain time for her. Macy's mother, Dana, teaches at Rockville Elementary in the Louisburg district and brought up the idea of transferring to Louisburg.

Lemke decided to take a leap of faith and it paid off in a big way as she is a two-time starting goalie for the Wildcat program.

"If it weren't for Covid-19, I would've never come to Louisburg," Macy said. "In many ways I love Covid, and because of it I was able to meet some incredible friends and families and find a place where I felt more belongingness than I did in Olathe schools. I was already enrolled at Olathe South and my parents had talked about moving me to the high school to really get the education and soccer opportunities that I needed. It was a scary decision, but it was the best decision I've ever made bringing me to a place that felt like home."



***Louisburg senior Macy Lemke signed her letter of intent to join the Coffeyville Community College soccer program. Seated next to Macy is her mother Dana and brother Devin. Standing (from left) is Louisburg head coach Ben York, her brother Drew, father Marc and Louisburg assistant coach Jordan Roquemore.***

Lemke became the starter last season as a junior and made a big impact for the Wildcats as she earned honorable mention All-Frontier League and all-state honors.

In her first full season as a starter, Lemke finished with 56 saves on the season and recorded nine clean sheets.

The feeling that drew her to Louisburg is the same one she felt when she decided Coffeyville was going to be her new home. She also joins a Red Raven program that has put together winning campaigns in seven of the last eight seasons.

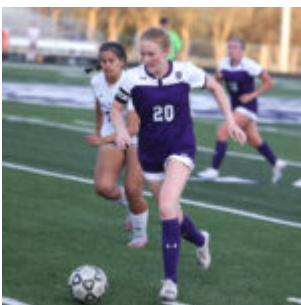
“Coming to Louisburg made me realize I loved the smaller school and smaller community a lot more than being in the

city," she said. "I knew I felt most comfortable going to a college that would be small and convenient to play soccer, but also gave me the Louisburg feel.

"When I went to Coffeyville it felt just like Louisburg, almost better. I knew it was right and being around the soccer girls felt more than amazing. It's not too far and not too big. I am able to pursue Sociology and continue playing soccer."

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## **Gassman excited to join defending national champion, Iowa Western**



***Louisburg's Bree Gassman will continue her soccer career this coming fall as she signed with Iowa Western Community College. Iowa Western is the defending junior college national champion.***

For the past four years, Bree Gassman has been a big part of a very successful Louisburg girls soccer program.

Coming off a strong senior campaign with the Wildcats, Gassman is now going from one successful team to the next.

Last spring, Gassman signed her letter of intent to play

soccer for Iowa Western Community College, the defending junior college national champion.

It is an opportunity Gassman couldn't pass up and one she didn't think would be possible early on in her soccer career.

"Being able to play at the college level is something I never thought I would be able to do," Gassman said. "Growing up it was never really a dream of mine. I mostly joined soccer because the rest of my siblings played it. However, I started to really enjoy the sport and wanted to be able to play it to the best of my ability.

"Going into my senior year I realized that playing at the next level was something I actually wanted to do. I enjoy everything soccer related and fitness, so I figured playing in college would allow me to stay active at a high level for a couple more years."

Not only was the chance to play for a national champion an enticing offer, but it became even better when she found out she would be able to rejoin a former teammate.

Reese Johnson, a 2022 Louisburg grad, was a big part of Iowa Western's national championship run, and she spoke highly of the program.

"Knowing their success as a national champion, and the idea that one day I could be a part of it, helped persuade me a lot," Gassman said. "Not just that, but having Reese there helped persuade me too. Not only is she a familiar face in a different area, but she also talked very highly of the college and I knew it wasn't just someone trying to sell it to me. It was someone who's been having a genuinely good time there."



***Bree Gassman signed her letter of intent to join the Iowa Western soccer program. Sitting next to Bree are her parents Tara and Brent Gassman. Standing (from left) is her sister Carlee, Louisburg head coach Ben York, assistant coach Jordan Roquemore and Bree's brother, Cade.***

There is also another Louisburg connection to the Reiver program. Assistant coach Jamison Parkhill is a Louisburg graduate and Gassman believes the coaching staff did a good job to help her feel comfortable with making the move to the college level.

"The coaches at Iowa Western are very kind and helpful," Gassman said. "Jamison Parkhill, is the one I talked to the most for recruiting. They definitely want the team to be more of a family than anything else. They have this motto for every year they've had women's soccer and this year it's 'fam20' to say that this is the 20th year/family they've had.

"They told me that they really want to be able to expand the team this year with more numbers. So I may just be helping the girls get better during practice, but I'll certainly work hard and hope to get game time."

Gassman is coming off a big senior season for Louisburg as she

earned second team All-Frontier League honors and was an honorable mention all-state selection.

She helped the Wildcats to the regional championship game against Bishop Miege and finished with seven goals and nine assists for the season.

“Being involved in Louisburg sports has helped me a lot,” Gassman said. “I was able to grow as an athlete and a person. My whole life revolves around fitness, so without it I wouldn’t be me. Playing soccer at Louisburg really allowed me to realize that playing in college is something I wanted to try. I’ve created so many memories with my teammates and coaches that I’m forever thankful for.”

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## Ross named Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year



***Louisburg senior Adyson Ross was voted by the head coaches as the 2023 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year.***

No matter what sport Adyson Ross competed in this season, she was one of – if not the best – athlete on the field or court.

Her postseason honors more than bare that out.



Ross was a first-team All-Frontier League selection in two of those and also earned all-state honors as well. No matter the sport, she made her team better.

Her success in all three sports – volleyball, basketball and soccer – were just some of the reasons Ross was named the 2023 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year.

“Being named athlete of the year means so much,” Ross said. “There are so many outstanding athletes at LHS. To be selected for this award is a huge honor and I am so grateful.”

Ross’ memorable senior year started in the fall with the volleyball program. The Lady Cats upset No. 1 seed Baldwin in the sub-state championship and eventually had a fourth-place finish at the state tournament.

However, the season didn’t start out the best. Louisburg had trouble finding that team chemistry it was looking for, and it seemed like they were missing something. Louisburg coach Leanna Willer asked Ross, who is one of the team’s top hitters, to change positions and play the libero spot.

It was shortly after Ross made the move, that the team took off and started to play some of its best volleyball – including a run to the sub-state championship.

“There were so many special moments from this year, but I think one that stands out the most was during volleyball season.” Ross said. “We were playing Baldwin for the championship and it was game point. I was on the line to serve and I just remember thinking in that moment that everything I’d been working for had come down to that one serve. When we won the point it was just the most special and rewarding feeling. It is something that I will remember forever.”

That season led to second team All-Frontier League honors as a libero as she recorded 363 digs on the season to go along with 67 kills and 41 aces.

Then came basketball where Ross was a starting guard on a Lady Cat team that reached the sub-state championship game. She was the team's leading scorer at 12.5 points per game and averaged nearly seven rebounds a contest, to go along with two assists and 1.6 steals.

With all that, Ross was named to the All-Frontier League first team and earned second team all-state honors. She was also named to the Missouri vs. Kansas all-star game. Two years ago, she was also a part of the best finish in school history when Louisburg finished third at the state tournament.

She reached the state final four with all three programs during her time at Louisburg.

"The experience was so amazing," Ross said. "I might be biased, but Louisburg is really a one of a kind place. You just don't really see the same amount of support for athletics in many other towns. To be able to play in the state final four for three different sports was so cool."



***Louisburg's Adyson Ross poses with two of her coaches, Adrienne Lane and Leanna Willer, after receiving the Athlete***

***of the Year award.***

On the pitch, Ross had one of her best seasons as the team's starting midfielder. She helped Louisburg to a spot in the regional championship against Bishop Miege.

She also put together a strong final campaign as she finished the season with 16 goals and 21 assists to go along with 35 shots on goal. Ross later earned first team All-Frontier League honors and was also named second team all-state.

"Even though we didn't win that last game, I remember looking up in the stands before the game and seeing the stadium filled with purple, and the amount of student support was crazy," Ross said. "I just thought to myself, how special it is to be a part of something like that. For so many people to come out and support like they did was amazing, despite the team we were going up against."

Playing three sports at a high level does take a toll at times, and there were moments Ross wasn't sure if being a three-sport athlete was for her.

"Continuing all three sports through high school is definitely something I'm proud of," Ross said. "There were a lot of times when I considered dropping a sport so I could spend time to focusing on another. As a freshman I didn't see myself continuing all three through senior year, because I didn't think it was possible to fully commit to each sport.

"My coaches were very supportive and flexible, and all of them were totally on board with it, even though it meant sometimes missing workouts and preseason stuff due to conflicts with another sport. I feel like playing three was more of an advantage to me as an athlete. It helped me to be versatile, and not having an off-season kept me in great shape."

Even with all her successes, Ross is putting athletics in the rear view mirror, for now. She will be attending Kansas State

University and is ready to focus more on the academic side of things.

Still, Ross knows she will never forget all the memories she made during her time at Louisburg.

“Even though I’m choosing not to continue my athletic career past high school, I feel so blessed for all the memories and friendships sports have given me. They will for sure last a lifetime.”

Previous winners:

2018: Isabelle Holtzen

2019: Carson Buffington

2020: Reilly Ratliff-Becher

2021: Alyse Moore

2022: Delaney Wright