

# Eberhart, Thompson medal to lead Wildcats at Paola



*Louisburg senior Johnny Eberhart shot an 85 and medaled fourth at the Paola Invitational last Monday.*

PAOLA – The Louisburg golf team took another step forward in its season last week when the Wildcats took part in the Paola Invitational.

Senior Johnny Eberhart and junior Johnny Thompson finished in the top 10 and led the Wildcats to a fourth-place finish with a 373.

Louisburg finished a stroke behind third place Paola and two strokes behind runner-up Kansas City Christian. Anderson County won the meet with a 358.

It was the kind of showing the Wildcats were looking for at the Paola County Club, in what was their second meet of the season.

“I didn’t expect too many medals this season, but the golfers are one of the most coachable groups I have had,” Louisburg coach Brian Burns said. “We as a team still have a long way to go with building confidence in their swings and the short game, but we are off to a great start.”

Eberhart bounced back in a big way from his opening tournament as he shot a team-best 85 at Paola and medaled fourth overall.



***Louisburg junior Johnny Thompson finished seventh at the Paola Invitational with an 89.***

Thompson earned his second medal in as many meets as he shot an 89 to take seventh overall. The Wildcats nearly had a third medalist, but junior A.J. Arriola was 11th with a 93.

“Johnny Eberhart knows that he can shoot in the 80s on that course and he was disappointed with shooting 100 at Dub’s Dread,” Burns said. “He definitely redeemed himself. Johnny Thompson has been consistent in tournaments and he focuses well for competitions.

“I thought A.J. Arriola might get a medal as well as he parred his last two holes, but he just missed it. They all did well.”

Sophomore Jackson Olson was next on the team with a 106, while senior Dacey Wieland and sophomore Brock Varns carded a 107 and 115, respectively.

Louisburg is back in action Tuesday when it competes in the Osawatomie Invitational. The Wildcats will hit the Sycamore Ridge links in Spring Hill on Thursday for the Frontier League Invitational.

“Sycamore will be a big challenge if they can’t trust their swings,” Burns said. “You have to hit it straight. The greens out there are crazy fast and will be a feat in itself.”

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## **New look Wildcat golf team fares well in opener**



KANSAS CITY, Kan. – The Louisburg golf team had a new look about it last week during its season opener at the Piper Invitational.

All six of the Wildcat golfers that competed were new to the varsity squad and each of them had to battle a tough course in Dub’s Dread.

Still, Louisburg had a strong showing as the Wildcats shot a 391, which was good for fifth place out of 11 teams.

Junior Johnny Thompson had a nice outing in his varsity debut as he carded a 90 and he finished sixth overall.

“The golfers are improving at a fast rate from where they

started,” Louisburg coach Brian Burns said. “Johnny has shortened his swing, which helps him stay more connected and away from slicing as much. This change, and his great chipping short game, helped him score well.”

Another junior, A.J. Arriola, shot a 95 and finished just outside the top 10, in 12th. Senior Johnny Eberhart carded a 100 to take 27th.

Sophomore Jackson Olson was 41st with a 106, while sophomore Carter Stuteville and senior Dacey Wieland shot a 114 to finish in a tied for 53rd.

Mill Valley won the team title with a 341 and Basehor-Linwood was second with a 364. Mill Valley’s Nick Mason won the individual title with a 70.

The Wildcats are back on the links today when they travel to the Paola Invitational. Tee time is set for 2 p.m. at the Paola Country Club.

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## Top Louisburg Sports Stories of 2020



There hasn’t been a year like 2020, and for most people, they are ready to put it behind them and forget it ever existed.

Still, with all the challenges that 2020 brought, there were still plenty of positives to talk about when it came to Louisburg High School sports. History-making state places and state medals were plentiful on this list, but it wasn't all positive. Louisburg had to say goodbye to a beloved town figure and athletes had to deal with the loss of spring sports.

Below are the top stories from 2020, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the explanation is the link to the actual story from the event.

When putting the list together, I took a lot of things into account – whether it was team vs. individual, popularity of the sport, historical achievements and the interest it drew on the web site. Thanks to the cancellation of spring sports, I don't have the top 10 like I normally do, but I got close.

This year was a blast to cover, when I had the opportunity, anyway. Still, I am looking forward to what 2021 will bring. Thank you for everyone's support and can't wait for it all to begin again.



## **8. Ratliff-Becher wins state powerlifting title**

After winning a state championship in 2019 Reilly Ratliff-Becher had every intention of backing up her performance during the Class 4A State Powerlifting Championships on March 7 at Piper High School.

In fact, the Louisburg senior wanted to improve it. Last



season, Ratliff-Becher took first in everything but squat, which she got runner-up.

This time around, she got the clean sweep.

Ratliff-Becher took first in bench, squat and clean and that led to her second straight state championship in the 180-pound class.

“It means a lot to me that I was able to win the state title again,” Ratliff-Becher said. “I set a goal for myself to win first in everything since I had got second in squat last year and I achieved it. Even though it wasn’t my best showing with the numbers I got on my lifts.

“The competition was very good this year, as it always is. But, fortunately with all the work I put in to at least maintain my numbers from last year, meant I was able to lift bigger amounts than my competition.”



## 7. Conley named state and midwest coach of the year

After a third place finish to end the year, Louisburg boys

soccer coach Kyle Conley was recognized among the state's best.

Conley was named as the Class 4-1A Coach of the Year by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association in November.

He guided the Wildcats to a 16-2 record on the season and the team's highest finish in program history when Louisburg ousted Rose Hill, 3-0, in the state third-place game.

Just a few weeks later, Conley was honored once again – this time on the girls' side.

Despite the lost season, the United Soccer Coaches wanted to recognize coaches for their past accomplishments and for what this past spring was supposed to hold.

Atop that list was Conley as he was named as the Small School Midwest Coach of the Year.

"I am absolutely honored to receive this award," Conley said. "There are so many great coaches in the Midwest, but to me this is a program award. None of this is possible without everyone involved; girls coming to work their tails off everyday, parents traveling and supporting us anywhere and everywhere, community helping with supporting the program, the school supporting the girls, etc. Without the support and buy in from the girls, parents and community none of this is possible."

The Wildcat girls program has had a successful start in its four years. Conley has a 54-22-2 record during that span, that included two state runner-ups and another state final four appearance.





## 6. Louisburg cheer places third at state

The Louisburg cheer squad had to do its postseason competition a little different this year thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It didn't seem to bother them much as the defending state champions found themselves right in the thick of things again.

Although they didn't repeat as champs, they were still among the state's best as the Wildcats cheerleaders finished third in the state back in November.

Unlike performing in front of judges like they did in 2019, the Wildcats had to video tape their performance and send it in to be judged. It fared well as they tallied 83.35 points to finish in the top 3.

Baldwin earned the state title with 88.85 points and Abilene was second with 85.25.

Members of the Louisburg cheer squad are Bella Feikert, Addison Drake, Brooklyn Harmon, Jayden Trester, Maddy Carpenter-Ross, Sophie Katzer, Sammy McDaniel, Julia Arriola, Andrea Gaza, JoJo Hendrickson, Sydney Dudzik, Abby Bradley, Anna Poe, Sienna Finch, Mable Graham, Audrey Anderson, Zoe Weers, Anna Morrison and Maggie Madison



## **5. Holtzen, Owens earn state medals for Wildcat wrestling**

Ryan Owens and Cade Holtzen both had their own agendas going into the state wrestling tournament.

Owens, qualified for state last year, but left without a win and he vowed to fix that this time around. As for Holtzen, he came up short in his efforts for a second state medal as a



sophomore last season and had all the motivation not to come home empty-handed again.

Both wrestlers more than made up for their rough patches a year ago.

Owens and Holtzen left Salina with a state medal during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships on Friday and Saturday at the Tony's Pizza Events Center.



Owens made it to the semifinals and wound up earning a fourth-place medal at 120 pounds, while Holtzen finished fifth at 126 pounds.

It also marked the first time since 2016 that Louisburg finished the season with multiple state medalists, when Nathan Keegan and Mason Koechner each brought home medals.

The Wildcats nearly had three medalists as sophomore Brandon Doles finished one win shy of a state medal at 160 pounds with a 2-2 record.



#### **4. Dennis steps down as LHS team doctor**

Almost every day of the week, if you were looking for Damon Dennis, he could be found at his office on 11 S. Broadway St., helping treat those pesky aches and pains, taking X-rays, or mending those beaten up athletes after a game.

Doc D – as he is affectionately known – opened Louisburg Chiropractic Office 28 years ago and has served as the

Louisburg High School athletic team doctor for almost that same amount of time.

Dennis has seen it all. The walls in his office are lined with mementos from his years of service to both the community and the high school.

He has taped thousands of ankles, seen even more patients and has touched many lives during his time in Louisburg. That is why this week is one of the more emotional times in his life.

In May, he left Louisburg Chiropractic Office and handed the reins over to Dr. Jake Polzin. Add to that, Dennis also stepped away as LHS' team doctor and left an absence on the sidelines and behind the mic that many in Louisburg have come to know.

"My decision to step down and sell the practice has turned out to be the hardest thing I have ever done," Dennis said. "I have poured everything I have into my job and community. It has become my entire existence. I was taught from a young age to serve others and your community. I feel like the pressures I have put on myself have become unhealthy. I have put about 40 years work in to 28 and feel like there is never going to be a good time to make such a huge life change.

"That being said, I feel like I need to make changes while I am still able to do the things that will be best for my family. Dr. Polzin came along and I think he will carry on the work at the office wonderfully. We are a lot alike in many ways. I could not have found anyone better to replace me."

For many, Dennis has been a big part of people's lives, especially in the athletic arena. He has served as the LHS team doctor since 1992 and has treated many athletes in those 28 years.





### 3. Girls Cross Country Takes Third at State

For 23 years, the Louisburg cross country program has been chasing a top three finish at the Class 4A meet.

The Wildcats have had several teams qualify, especially in the last few seasons, but have always come up short of their goal. Following Saturday's race in Wamego, the Wildcats can finally stop running after it.

The Louisburg girls put together an historic performance at the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships at Wamego Country Club. The Lady Cats earned a state plaque with a third place finish as they surpassed Buhler by eight points to record the school's first top three state finish.

Junior Reese Johnson, sophomores Claire Brown, Bree Gassman and Nova Ptacek, along with freshmen Lola Edwards, Maddy Rhamy and Erin Apple, will all go down in school history as they became the first Wildcat team to bring home state hardware.



"It means the world to me to be a part of the first team ever to place at state," Rhamy said. "Coming into the state meet, I was just hoping our team would be in the top half, so you could imagine my excitement when our team placed third. I didn't even know we made school history until our coaches told us."

Rhamy was one of two freshmen who earned top 10 finishes individually, along with Edwards. Rhamy finished eighth overall in 20 minutes and 58 seconds, while Edwards was right behind her in 10th in 21:02.

Junior Reese Johnson also garnered a state medal as she was 15th in 21:28 to help the Lady Cats to an historic performance.

It was a proud moment for many in the Louisburg program, and included in that is John Reece. The longtime Wildcat head coach was all smiles following his team's performance.

"It is 23 years the making," coach Reece said. "You always have the plans and goals to get to state and then you get a group to go to state and do something great. This year was one of those. With the Frontier League as tough as it is, and then getting third there, put it in our heads that maybe we could do this. They all went out and ran their races, and that just shows their grit and determination and who they are."

A week earlier, the Wildcats also made history as it was the first time in school history when they qualified the entire boys team to the state meet as they took third at regionals.



## **2. Boys Soccer Finishes Runner-Up At State**

As the Louisburg players huddled around their state plaque, many of them looked at it in awe and wonder.

“Hey guys, we won this,” a player shouted.

The statement was obvious at the time, but nonetheless, their excitement was more than warranted.

For the first time in program history, the Louisburg boys soccer team brought home a plaque from the state final four as the Wildcats defeated Rose Hill, 3-0, on Saturday in the third place match of the Class 4-1A state tournament at Stryker Sports Complex in Wichita.

It was only the second time in school history that the Wildcats had it made it this far, with the other being in 2016, when they finished fourth.

“There are only six teams in the entire state that get to end their year with a win and we wanted to be one of those teams,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We want to be able to hang up a banner on our field and we wanted a plaque so that no one can forget what these kids earned and what they did this season. I am so proud of all of them.”

It was a program defining moment for the Wildcats as they began the weekend searching for a state championship, but lost 2-0 to Bishop Miege on Friday in the semifinals. Still, recording the best finish in school history is nothing for someone to hang their head about, and the Wildcats came out Saturday wanting to make sure they brought some hardware home.

“It’s absolutely crazy to think about what we have accomplished this year, partly because I have only played soccer in high school,” senior captain Logan Faulkner said. “Bringing a state plaque back will just be a reminder of what we did and how we reached our goal.”



# **1. COVID-19 Cancels Spring Sports**

In March, Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly closed all schools for the rest of the 2019-20 school year due to the spread of COVID-19.

When most students hear school has been closed, especially in the winter, cheers erupt. In this case, however, the tone was much more somber – especially among the senior class.

Proms were canceled. Any plans they had for a graduation ceremony were put on hold, and for more than 30 seniors, their last opportunity at playing a sport at Louisburg High School was taken away.

In fact, close to 200 students were planning on participating in an activity in the spring, but with no school, the Kansas State High School Activities Association followed suit and canceled the spring season the day after Gov. Kelly's declaration.

Students, parents and coaches alike have had to come to grips that a season they had been looking forward to all year, was never going to happen. Tears flowed, walls were punched in frustration and some were left speechless.

There would be no game days, no Senior Nights and no postseason runs. Athletes had to figure out how to cope with this fact and it was a challenge for the Louisburg girls soccer, track and field, baseball, softball, golf and swim teams.

Many of those teams had big postseason aspirations after success in 2019 and were left wondering what could have been.

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# Garrett Rolofson selected as 2020 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year



Garrett Rolofson never considered himself as one of the top athletes at Louisburg High School.

Rolofson grew up playing the game of basketball, but never really had any interest outside of that. Then in his junior year, soccer and golf started to appear on his radar – and in two year's time – became on the best players in the school at both.

During the 2019-20 school year, all Rolofson did was earn first team all-league and second team all-state honors in goal for the Wildcat soccer team. Then was a full-time starter on the Louisburg basketball team and was considered one of the top three golfers on a team that was poised to make another trip to the state tournament.

It has been a wild couple of years for Rolofson, but it ended with him being named as the 2020 Louisburg Sports Zone Male Athlete of the Year.

“Receiving the award for the male athlete of the year was a complete surprise to me,” Rolofson said. “I did not expect to be nominated for the award, let alone receive it, and I am honored. This award means a lot to me because it goes to show that all the time and effort you put into working towards your goals in the offseason really does pay off.”

The award, which is in its third year, is to recognize an outstanding LHS student athlete. Louisburg Sports Zone asked the head coaches at LHS to submit nominations and those nominations were then organized and submitted back to the coaches for a vote.

The coaches then submitted their top two choices and the number of votes were added up, which decided the winner.

Along with his all-league and all-state honors in soccer, Rolofson also holds the school record for most victories in a season with 16, second in shutouts with eight and third in saves with 82 in a season. He was a big reason the Wildcats were able to win a school record 16 games in 2019 and earn a league and regional title.

“Garrett was a fantastic goalkeeper and leader for us,” Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. “He went from not playing for a really long time to Miami County Republic goalkeeper of the year, first team All Frontier League and second team 4A-1A All State in his first year as a starter in our program. He was a tremendous leader and had a work ethic second to none. He, as well as, the other members of our defense helped lead the team to the 2019 Frontier League title and another regional championship. I could not be happier for Garrett as he is very deserving of this award.”





It was Conley who helped convince Rolofson to go out for soccer, in an albeit, very untraditional way.

"I remember I was lifting weights the summer before my junior year when I heard Coach Conley call my name and he threw a basketball at me," Rolofson said. "I caught it and he told me to try out for the soccer team as a goalie. At first I thought he was crazy until I saw the comradery and family the soccer team had built and I got sucked in immediately. My favorite thing about the soccer team was that it wasn't just a team it was a family. Every person on the team was a part of one big family and that was something special.

"From the coaches all the way to the new freshman, they were all welcomed in with open arms. Coach (Michael) Pickman coached me and taught me everything I know about the game from a goalie standpoint. Coach Conley taught me everything I know

about the game and taught us very valuable life lessons that will follow me forever.”

Rolofson also worked his way up the basketball ranks to where he was a full-time starter as a senior and brought a lot of tenacity for the Wildcats as they weaved their way through a difficult Frontier League schedule.

“Rolo has made so many strides athletically throughout his high school career,” Louisburg boys basketball coach Ty Pfannenstiel said. “He’s an incredibly hard worker and turned himself into an explosive, tough athlete. He was our toughest kid on the basketball court this year. He is a high character kid. We are really going to miss his leadership and I have no doubt he is going to be successful in the future.”

Basketball brought an experience that Rolofson won’t soon forget.

“Stepping onto the court on a Tuesday or Friday night with a buzzing student section behind you just gave me the chills every time,” Rolofson said. “The fans, support from the community, teammates and coaches made basketball special. Basketball is the longest season of the year and that provides countless hours with teammates building bonds and friendships that will last forever along with memories to go with it. I think that’s what I enjoyed the most was the friends and atmosphere the Louisburg community brought to the gym on game nights.”





Like soccer, golf almost never happened for Rolofson either. As it turned out, he was one of the big reasons the Wildcats qualified for state as a team a year ago.

The spread of COVID-19 didn't allow Rolofson an opportunity to see how his senior year would have turned out on the golf course, but the game helped change him in a short amount of time.

"Golf was something special, although we didn't get a senior season like we had planned," Rolofson said. "I am still thankful for the year I did get to play as a junior. The spring of my sophomore year I had never once set foot onto a

golf course and was something I could never have seen myself doing until Calvin Dillon convinced me to give it a try. From then on I fell in love with the game, but not only that, it was if every time my classmates went golfing I got invited as well even though I had barely played.

“The countless hours of fun competitions out on the golf courses all throughout the years were the best part about golfing. No matter where we played, how I performed, or how the team performed I always had a great time playing golf and that’s what made the sport so special to me.”

The overall aspect of playing three sports not only gave him confidence in the athletic arena, but it also provided him life lessons and a way to escape the everyday stresses in life.

“Staying active throughout all of my high school career was very beneficial to me not only as an athlete but as a person,” Rolofson said. “Sports have always been a big part of my life and allowed for me to get away from the stress and anxiety of the real world and enjoy the sports I love. I gained a passion for sports throughout high school and new passions for sports I never would’ve thought to try. Most importantly though, I learned the quality of leadership, teamwork and giving effort into everything you do not only in sports but in the classroom and in the real world.”

Sports taught Rolofson a lot of about work ethic, but it was his father’s experience that left a lasting impact on him.

Bob Rolofson suffered a brain aneurysm several years ago, and Garrett watched as his father – slowly, but surely – worked his way back through many obstacles that stood in his way. He saw his father’s strength and dedication and it is something that was contagious to Garrett and gave him motivation.

“Most importantly I want to say thank you to my parents for showing me what it really means to never give up and I think

without them I never would have been able to achieve any of the goals I have achieved this year," Garrett said. "Through my dad's brain aneurysm journey I was shown that if my dad can recover from such a traumatic brain injury, and work as hard as he did to be where he is today, that I can work just as hard. He showed me that I can do anything if I put my mind to it and I really took it to heart. I also want to thank my mom for always reminding me of that and pushing me to do my best in everything I do, not just sports."

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## 2020 Athlete of the Year Nominees



For the past four years, Louisburg Sports Zone has given out Athlete of the Week awards during each of the three sports seasons. I do it to recognize special athletic achievements and to highlight the athletes.

For the third straight year, Louisburg Sports Zone will be handing out an Athlete of the Year honor to a male and female athlete at Louisburg High School. I wanted the opportunity to recognize those who exemplify what it means to be an "athlete."

Obviously, 2020 has not been the typical year when the spring was cancelled due to COVID-19. However, I still want to make

sure those athletes that were set to make an impact in the spring were recognized as well.

Although I am giving out the award, I wanted the process to be subjective, so I asked the head coaches at LHS to help me out. I asked each coach to send me nominations of who they thought exemplified the Athlete of the Year honor. They voted for their top male and female athletes and then I tabulated the results. I will release the results in the coming days.

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

## Female Athlete of the Year Nominees





## **Haley Cain – Senior – Volleyball, Basketball, Soccer**

Haley was a three-sport athlete during her time at Louisburg High School and recorded the rare feat of earning 12 varsity letters.

In the fall, she helped the Louisburg volleyball team to its third consecutive state tournament and was selected to represent Kansas in the Greater Kansas City All-Star Match. She was also named to the All-Frontier League second team as a middle hitter.

Cain was also a two-time team captain for the Louisburg girls basketball team and was a key player for the Lady Cats this past season. She was also set to be a big contributor for the Wildcat soccer team in the spring as well.



## **Trinity Moore – Senior – Cross Country, Soccer**

Trinity made cross country history for the Wildcats this past season as she medaled third at state and broke her own school record in the process. The Louisburg senior also medaled at state all four years.

Moore was also a returning starter for the Wildcat soccer team and was a key factor in helping the Wildcats to three consecutive state final fours and two state runner-up finishes.

She started 43 games for the Wildcats and concluded her career with 18 goals and eight assists. She is fifth in school history with 44 points.





## **Erin Lemke – Senior – Volleyball, Soccer**

Erin was another multi-sport athlete for Louisburg as she was a member of the volleyball and soccer teams. Lemke was an outside hitter for the Lady Cat volleyball team and was selected to represent Kansas in the Greater Kansas City All-Star Match.

On the soccer team, Lemke was a two-time team captain for the Wildcats and was a returning all-league and all-state player. She was also one of the team's top goal scorers.

Lemke had a very productive career for the Wildcats as she started 48 of her 59 games and earned all-league and all-state honors as a sophomore and a junior.

She finished her career with 29 goals and 27 assists and Lemke has the second-best assist mark for a season in program history with 17 and is third in career assists. She also added seven game-winning goals.



## **Reilly Ratliff-Becher – Senior – Volleyball, Powerlifting, Softball**

Reilly was a multi-sport athlete for Louisburg High School as she competed in volleyball, power-lifiting and softball. She was an honorable mention all-league selection in volleyball as she served as the Lady Cat libero.

Ratliff-Becher was a big part of the Lady Cats' state tournament runs the last three years. She was also selected to participate in the Greater Kansas City All-Star game last November.

As a powerlifter, Reilly recorded her second-straight state championship and took first in each of the three individual events.

Ratliff-Becher was also a returning starter on the Lady Cat softball team after she helped Louisburg to a state tournament appearance a year ago as a catcher and outfielder.

## Male Athlete of the Year Nominees



## **Garrett Rolofson – Senior – Soccer, Basketball, Golf**

Garrett is a three-sport athlete for Louisburg as he was a member of the soccer, basketball and golf teams. In soccer, Rolofson served as the Wildcats' goalkeeper and helped Louisburg to a regional title and a school record 16 wins.

Rolofson was named to the All-Frontier League first team and to the all-state second team. He posted eight shutouts on the season and allowed only 17 goals, four of which came from penalty shots. He also finished with 78 saves on the season and allowed the second fewest goals in Class 4-1A.

In basketball, Rolofson was a starter on the Wildcat basketball team and this spring he was all set to help the Wildcat golf team to their second consecutive state tournament appearance. He was the team's No. 3 golfer a year ago.





## **Madden Rutherford – Senior – Football, Baseball**

Madden was a multi-sport athlete for Louisburg as he was a key member of the Wildcat football and baseball teams.

Rutherford, who was a team captain on the football team, was selected as a first team All-Frontier League quarterback. Rutherford finished the year with 671 yards passing with eight touchdowns and he also added 245 yards on the ground and four more scores.

On the baseball team, Rutherford was also a returning all-league player and was slated to be the Wildcats' No. 1 starter this spring.

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# Varns excited to play for defending national champ – Saint Mary of the Woods



**Louisburg senior Drake Varns is looking forward to playing golf in college with Saint Mary of the Woods**

Entering his freshman year of high school, golf wasn't even on Drake Varns' radar.

Four years ago, however, all that changed.

Varns tried out and made the team as a freshman, and from there, golf quickly became a love of his. In less than four year's time, Varns went from not really playing the sport to getting a chance to compete at the collegiate level.

Last month, with his family and friends in attendance at his house, Varns made it official when he signed his letter of intent to play golf at Saint Mary of the Woods College, an NAIA program based out of Indiana.

"To play in college is a huge accomplishment," Varns said. "Starting golf freshman year left me a little behind most but to get where I am now is amazing. Plus, signing with all my family and friends was a huge deal for me since they are the ones who really pushed me through and made me who I am. Also,

with all this COVID stuff going on, it really was a much needed get together.”

Varns was all set to help the Louisburg golf team to a second straight trip to the state tournament, but the COVID-19 pandemic cancelled the spring season, which forced him to skip his final season of high school and get ready for the college level.

He will join a respected program on the NAIA level as the Pomeroy's won the national championship the last two years and Varns is hoping to continue the tradition.

“The Saint Mary program has had a winning program for the past couple years and they won consecutive national championships the past two years,” Varns said. “This attracted me, along with the big senior class graduating allowing for young golfers like myself to get playing time my first year.”

With a lot of golfers exiting the program, it gives Varns an opportunity to compete right away and Saint Mary coach Abe Nasser is excited to see what Varns can do.

“Drake has a great personality and will add a lot of character to our team,” Nasser said. “His game has potential and we’ll look for him to contribute from the start of his career.”



**Drake Varns signed his letter of intent to golf at Saint Mary of the Woods College last month. Standing behind Drake is his brother Brock, his father Ryan, his sister Reagan and his mother Paulette.**

As happy as he was with his decision, it wasn't the only option for Varns.

The Louisburg senior had an offer to golf at Southwestern College in Winfield, but he also had an opportunity to kick on the collegiate football level as well. As he began to weigh all the offers, he realized Saint Mary was the way to go.

"It wasn't that hard of a decision to go there with the huge scholarship they offered me and how the campus felt like home," Varns said. "I had a couple other options like Southwestern in Winfield for golf. I could've chosen the football route and took the walk on position at Western Florida to kick, but the price difference and the feel for



those colleges wasn't for me."

Now during his time off from school and preparing for college, Varns has been busy hitting the course and tuning up his game for his first year at Saint Mary. Although the competition gets tougher, he is looking forward to the challenge.

"I expect what every kid should try and do and that is to try my hardest and work to better myself both as an athlete and a person," Varns said.

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## 2020 Senior Spotlight: Deven Wieland



*Louisburg Sports Zone will be running senior spotlights in an effort to honor seniors who had their seasons taken away due to the spread of COVID-19.*

Deven Wieland wouldn't say golf is a passion of his.

Wieland took the sport up shortly before high school and found his way onto the high school team as a freshman. Since then, he has been a member of the Louisburg junior varsity team and has enjoyed his time with the program.

A lot of that joy comes from his senior teammates. Eight seniors were scheduled to vie for varsity spots this year and

be a part of a Wildcat team that was trying for its second straight trip to the state tournament.

"This senior class is what has made my golf experience so special," Wieland said. "Compared to grades that preceded us, our golf class is massive. I believe we would have had about eight seniors on the team, and I'm friends with each of them. We always get together over the summer in the offseason and play just because we enjoy the sport and each other's company. Growing up together and playing the same sport over four years of high school I feel like gave us a really tight connection as a team and as a class."

Wieland was all set to try and make the varsity roster as he wanted to experience the same success that his team achieved a year ago when they took third at the regional tournament and qualified for state.

After a couple weeks of practice, that opportunity was never going to happen for Wieland as COVID-19 shutdown the spring season before it could even get started.

"Hearing the news of everything being canceled was definitely pretty devastating at first," Wieland said. "I was really looking forward to playing a lot of golf and improving myself. I was also bummed out about not being able to experience all of the normal activities that the senior classes usually do."

"I think the thing that was most disappointing though, was not getting to spend my last quarter in high school with all of my friends. I've been dealing with that disappointment by keeping in touch with as many of them as I can and staying busy with other hobbies and activities."

Even though COVID-19 took away the final couple months of his senior year, Wieland still holds on to the memories he created during his time with the Wildcat program.

"It's hard to choose a definitive moment, but one of my

favorites would be chipping in for par at the Anderson County meet” Wieland said. “Coach O’Brien was there to witness it, and I remember being really ecstatic to save what most likely would have been a double bogey. Chip-ins are rare to begin with during practice, so it was a pretty awesome achievement to make during an actual tournament.”

Now that Wieland is preparing for his next stop in college, he knows he won’t get the opportunity to compete with his teammates much, but he is looking forward to taking the game of golf with him.

“To me, golf is relaxing,” Wieland said. “Walking around on the course and working on developing my shot is fun, and practicing doesn’t feel like work. On top of that, the guys that I play with are awesome, and they have become some of my best friends. I know that everyone involved with state last year was really looking forward to earning another trip this year, and it’s really unfortunate we don’t get to see that dream come to fruition.”

Other than golf, Louisburg Sports Zone also had a chance to catch up with Deven on how he has been coping with an early end to his senior year and some of his other interests. Here are his responses from the rest of our Q&A.

**LSZ:** What have you been missing the most during this time away from everyone?

**DW:** I’ve really just missed hanging out with, and seeing, all of my friends. I wish that I could have this time back to spend with them before I go to college.

**LSZ:** What is your most memorable moment as an athlete or in school, and why?

**DW:** My most memorable moment from any school activity would have to be the choir trip to New York City. Our choir was very fortunate to be selected, and it was something that very few



other high school choirs have done. The entire process from the selection to the trip felt surreal. I made so many awesome memories during that trip, and I have absolutely zero regrets about going.

**LSZ:** What is your favorite activity/hobby outside of sports and why?

**DW:** I'm bad at favorites so I'm going to list three of my favorite hobbies. First, I really like making videos. I started a YouTube channel when I was 10 or 11, and ever since I have been working on making videos. I find it really enjoyable, and I love watching the finished result. Secondly, I like playing the piano. Piano is very relaxing to me, and I like just picking a song that I think sounds good and trying to teach myself it. Lastly, I like solving Rubik's cube. I learned how to do it when I was pretty little, and I even went to a few speed solving competitions as well. It serves as a great time waster on road trips.

**LSZ:** What are your plans for after graduation?

**DW:** After graduation, I plan to attend the University of Alabama and study Mechanical Engineering. I am currently deciding if I want to obtain a master's in business administration or go to medical school after my first four years.

**LSZ:** What accomplishments that don't involve athletics are you most proud of and why?

**DW:** I'm really proud of winning the video and social media competition that KanSPRA hosted my sophomore year. It was awesome to succeed at something that I enjoy doing so much. I'm also proud of my two musical performances in high school. I had such a blast with all of the people involved both years, and I will remember those experiences my whole life. Lastly, I'm proud of all of the friends that I have made in Louisburg. I feel extremely blessed to have met all of

them, and I am very grateful for their friendship and support throughout high school.

**LSZ:** What do you think would be something that a lot of people don't know about you?

**DW:** My best friend is ranked No. 3 in the world in gunfight on Call of Duty: Modern Warfare

## **Deven's Favorites**

**Pro athlete:** Patrick Mahomes

**Pro team:** Kansas City Chiefs

**College team:** Kansas State

**Movie:** Iron Man

**TV Show:** Impractical Jokers

**Song:** All Girls Are the Same – Juice WRLD

**Band/Musician:** Juice WRLD

**Pregame meal/snack:** McDonald's with Barry O'Brien

**Class/subject:** Physics

**Teacher and why?** I liked too many of them to pick a favorite.

## **Previous Senior Spotlights**

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

Gabby Dugger – Softball

Sydni Keagle – Track

Olivia Chase – Soccer

Colin Cook – Golf

Morgan Messer – Soccer

August Daniels – Softball

Carter Anglin – Track and Field

Hannah Straub – Soccer

Reilly Ratliff-Becher – Softball

Madden Rutherford – Baseball

Lily McDaniel – Soccer



Garrett Harding – Track

Mackenzie Scholtz – Soccer

Calvin Dillon – Golf

Kat Coolidge – Softball

Charlie Koontz – Track

Ashley Moore – Soccer

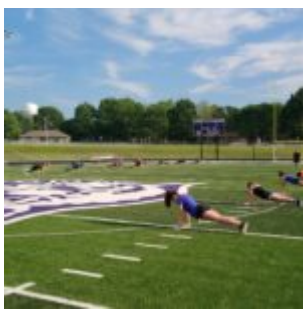
Carlee Gassman – Track

Purno Sangma – Track

Haley Cain – Soccer

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## **Wildcat athletes report back for summer conditioning**



**Almost 80 high school girls attended the first day of summer conditioning on Monday at Louisburg High School.**

For the first time in almost three months, Louisburg High School and Louisburg Middle School athletes found themselves back on the field starting Monday at Wildcat Stadium.

It didn't include any balls, equipment, weights and wasn't

indoors, but more than 300 athletes participated in the mandatory conditioning drills that were set by the Kansas State High School Activities Association.

“The turnout was exceptional, and considering the limit on group sizes, distance restrictions, and getting creative in using multiple spaces to accommodate the large numbers in appropriately sized groups allowed in phase three, these coordinators did a great job setting a standard,” Louisburg activities director Michael Pickman said.

This was all following the cancellation of the spring season to the spread of COVID-19 and KSHSAA allowed school districts to begin conditioning exercises on June 1. The Louisburg school district started this past Monday and each athlete must participate in 10 sessions before being able to attend in any team activities or camps.

Several coaches were in attendance running athletes through drills in three separate stations that would allow some space between everyone. Football coaches Robert Ebenstein, Ty Pfannenstiel, Joel McGhee and Drew Harding were on hand to lead drills, along with other staff from within the USD 416 school district.

“There are many coaches who are volunteering and just want to be there to support their athletes,” Pickman said. “It’s what makes the LHS coaching staff stand out from others. However, I have encouraged coaches not directly coordinating weights to stay home as much as they can with numbers restrictions, but so far we haven’t had that be an issue.”

High school boys begin each morning at 6 a.m., for the hour-long workout and high school girls follow and then it all finishes up with middle school. To start there were 121 high school boys in attendance, 79 girls and 126 middle school students.



**More than 120 Louisburg High School boys attended the first day of summer conditioning at Wildcat Stadium.**

To start the day, each athlete is screened before the start of conditioning with a temperature check and then they are divided into three groups. Each of them will participate in three stations that focuses on different workouts. There are no more than 45 athletes in a group and the coaches design workouts to promote the six feet of distance.

“There were temperatures that needed to be taken and protocol for sanitizing hands and checking in that went efficiently and smoothly overall,” Pickman said. “A lot of planning went into this with the coaches to make sure it went well. And Mr. Holloway (LHS principal) volunteered his time to help take temps at the various sessions.”

As far as cross country goes, interested runners instead attend running sessions held by coach John Reece that will take place throughout the summer and they do not have to attend conditioning.

Whenever the athletes have completed their 10 sessions, they are allowed to participate in team activities the rest of the

summer. As of right now, everything is on track to allow athletes to begin attending camps after June 29.

“Everything is progressing so far to according to schedule,” Pickman said. “Assuming the governor’s phase out stage begins when it is supposed to, we will be ready to begin using the weight room, gyms, and sports equipment. Coaches will be able to have practices and then middle school and high school age camps after June 29. The younger kids who do not have to have the 10 days of acclimatization are able to run the week of June 22. With the schedule the way it is, kids should have no problem getting their 10 days of acclimatization needed to participate in camps.”

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## **Dennis leaves lasting legacy in Louisburg, LHS athletics**



Damon Dennis, and his wife Karla, pose for quick picture during a timeout at a Louisburg High School basketball game Dennis was announcing. Dennis, who is better known as Doc D, is handing over his business at Louisburg Chiropractic Office to Dr. Jacob Polzin and is stepping away as the LHS team doctor after 28 years of service. His last day at the office is tomorrow (Saturday).

Almost every day of the week, if you were looking for Damon



Dennis, he could be found at his office on 11 S. Broadway St., helping treat those pesky aches and pains, taking X-rays, or mending those beaten up athletes after a game.

Doc D – as he is affectionately known – opened Louisburg Chiropractic Office 28 years ago and has served as the Louisburg High School athletic team doctor for almost that same amount of time.

Dennis has seen it all. The walls in his office are lined with mementos from his years of service to both the community and the high school.

He has taped thousands of ankles, seen even more patients and has touched many lives during his time in Louisburg. That is why this week is one of the more emotional times in his life.

On Saturday, he will officially leave Louisburg Chiropractic Office and hand the reins over to Dr. Jake Polzin. Add to that, Dennis is also stepping away as LHS' team doctor and will leave an absence on the sidelines and behind the mic that many in Louisburg have come to know.

"My decision to step down and sell the practice has turned out to be the hardest thing I have ever done," Dennis said. "I have poured everything I have into my job and community. It has become my entire existence. I was taught from a young age to serve others and your community. I feel like the pressures I have put on myself have become unhealthy. I have put about 40 years work in to 28 and feel like there is never going to be a good time to make such a huge life change.

"That being said, I feel like I need to make changes while I am still able to do the things that will be best for my family. Dr. Polzin came along and I think he will carry on the work at the office wonderfully. We are a lot alike in many ways. I could not have found anyone better to replace me."

For many, Dennis has been a big part of people's lives,

especially in the athletic arena. He has served as the LHS team doctor since 1992 and has treated many athletes in those 28 years.



**Dennis (left) and Dr. Jake Polzin pose for a picture in their office. Polzin will officially take over the practice from Dennis after this week, but both have been seeing the patients the last three months.**

During the school year, Dennis would leave his place of business every day after 3 to go to the high school to tape up

athletes from all different sports and made sure they were all ready to go for practice. After that was over, he would rush back to his office to finish the day treating his patients.

It would be hectic life for some, but it is one that he has treasured for the last nearly three decades.

“My time in practice has been a blessing,” Dennis said. “I truly care about all of the patients and people in the community that I have been involved with. I have tried to be a positive impact on the town through my involvement in different organizations. As with any business, there are bumps in the road. I genuinely appreciate everyone who has had a positive impact on me through these years.

“I have poured my heart and soul in to every aspect of my business and involvement in the community, sometimes at the sacrifice of my wife, Karla. I am eternally grateful for her patience and love. Part of the reason why I am handing over the reigns is that I have a lot of making up for time to do.”





**Damon Dennis (middle) walks out of the locker room with the Wildcat football coaches prior to a game.**

Dennis and his family have made a lot of sacrifices during his time and many of the Wildcat coaches – both former and present – appreciate what he has done for them and their players.

“As far as what he has meant to the community, it is immeasurable,” longtime former coach Gary Griffin said. “He came in the first year and made himself available to all the coaches and was there for whatever the kids needed from the medical stuff, to a new pair of shoes, or money to go to a team dinner. He was even there to lend an ear to a kid that was having issues from girlfriends, teacher issues or problems at home.

“For me personally, he was a cheerleader when times were not good, he was an advocate for kids when I didn’t always know what was going on behind the scenes. I trusted Doc like he was a member of the coaching staff. I told him a lot of things in confidence so I could get his advice knowing it would not go



any further. As far as the community goes, he is a pillar and he is involved in everything and is held in high regards by most. It is really hard for Doc to tell anyone no, so most of his days are longer than just his office hours. Doc is going to be missed in so many ways. He is a very humble man and he is very deserving of slowing down and enjoying the fruits of his labor."

## **A Small Beginning**

Back in June of 1992 is when Dennis began to plant his roots in the town he would begin to call home.

Dennis purchased the small satellite office from Dr. Larry Fulk, who at the time also had a practice in Paola. Dennis was less than a year out of school and was eager to get involved in the Louisburg community.

Two months later, Dennis reached out to then Louisburg High School administrator Doug Chisam and asked if he could serve as the team's doctor – free of charge. Since August of 1992, Louisburg High School would not be the same.

Dennis made trips over to the high school for treatment and would also follow many of the team's to their games after work was over. It was a life that would go on to create many memories.

"Jim Knox, Don Meek and Doug Chisam were all very supportive and I am forever in their debt," Dennis said. "I started out just going to all games, home and away, and every sport that I could. At that time I was in the office from 6 am to 7 pm and then off to games 3-4 nights a week. The things I have always enjoyed about being the team doctor was the kids and the coaches. High school athletes have not changed since day one. They want someone who cares about and shows interest in what they are doing. I am still close with a lot of the students who have come through the high school and will

continue to be.

“My role evolved over the years. I began doing all the taping before practice and games, Impact testing, announcing basketball and other roles as the coaches requested. I enjoy helping others and that is how my role evolved in to so many other areas. Over the years, the coaches have included me and I will always be grateful to them for allowing me to be a part of the experience.”



**Damon and his wife Karla pose for a picture in front of his office back in the early 90s.**

His role got even bigger when the new high school was built and Dennis was asked if he would like to announce basketball games. He certainly didn't mind having a mic in his hand and loved playing off the crowd and making sure the athletes felt a little extra special.

“We had a girls' tournament and Dave Tappan asked me if I would announce the game,” Dennis said. “He thought it would be a nice touch to have an announcer. I am not sure he ever asked me to continue, I just did it. I had to be at games anyway and I like to talk, so it worked out. Dave never said to quit, so I just kept doing it.

"I really did enjoy that. I would try to throw in a little funny once and awhile just to see if people were listening. Dottie Cook had a birthday every game night for several years. Knowing the kids so well, it was fun to add their middle name or nickname at the game."

Tappan, who is currently the USD 416 assistant superintendent, worked as the LHS activities director and principal during many of Dennis' years in Louisburg and the two became quick friends.

With that, Tappan is well aware of Dennis' work ethic and commitment to Louisburg athletics. In fact, he has seen it firsthand.



**Doc D lets out a cheer on the sidelines following a big play during the Wildcats' 2010 state championship game.**

"Most people know that Doc doesn't take vacations very often,"

Tappan said. "In fact, it usually takes a team of us to get him out of the office for more than a day. But in 2010, he and Karla scheduled a trip over Thanksgiving break to Chicago. Well, that was also the year of our run to the state football championship and there was no way he was going to miss it. In typical Doc D fashion, he lined things up to perfection. He takes a 5 a.m. flight from Chicago to Kansas City, has Karla drive him to the Legends off of I-70 and at about 6:30 I'm picking him up and we beat the team to Salina. When the bus finally rolls in, he looks at Coach (Gary) Griffin with a grin and says, 'What took you so long?' About four hours later we were celebrating a championship.

"The commitment that Doc D has demonstrated over the years to the students of Louisburg schools is second to none. From the football sidelines on a Friday night in the fall, to being behind the mic in the LHS gym during basketball season, Doc always supported the students, the coaches and the administration of USD 416. I am proud to call Damon Dennis my friend."

## **Beyond The Call of Duty**

Running a business can be difficult enough, but when you have other responsibilities on top of all that, it can be stressful at times.

The coaches at Louisburg High School never got that when working with Doc D. Veteran and young coaches alike were amazed at the dedication he displayed.

"Doc D is one of the most honest and honorable men I have ever met," Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. "He has donated countless hours and years for helping Louisburg student athletes. He always went out of his way to help anyone and everyone. He wasn't always just helping players. He would always check in on the coaches as well – checking on their well-being, their teams, and their families.



"Doc always went out of his way to make someone feel important and special. He was NEVER too busy for anyone. He will be greatly missed and he is irreplaceable. Thank you Doc D for everything that you have done for my teams, my family and for myself. You are someone I am lucky enough to call a friend."

That dedication would not only be found after school in the evenings, but even before the sun came up as well.



**Doc D checks out Louisburg's Hallie Hutsell following an injury during last soccer season.**

"Doc D will be greatly missed," Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment said. "He unselfishly devoted many hours to our athletes and was always a phone call or a text away. I can't count how many times he would meet myself and an athlete or two at the school at 5:30 a.m. prior to departure for a volleyball tournament. Not only was he a great role model and mentor for the athletes, but he served as a great mentor to a

young coach for the past 14 years. He will be greatly missed by many.”

However, where Dennis is most recognized was on the football sidelines. He did anything from tending to injured athletes, mentoring future trainers and handing out free food or candy to the student section before certain games.

It wasn't gone unnoticed as many around the school and community know what Doc D has meant to the district.

“If Louisburg had a Mt. Rushmore, Damon would definitely be up there,” Louisburg graduate and longtime coach Jeff Lohse said. “Doc is one of the most selfless people that I know. He was always more than willing to help anyone out and never expected anything in return. I consider Doc to be a great friend of mine and this is definitely bittersweet. I wish him and Karla nothing but the best as they open up this new chapter in their lives. Damon will be missed but his legacy in Louisburg will live on forever.”

Dennis always made sure to welcome the new coaches to the district and made them feel a part of the family and that was the case with boys basketball coach Ty Pfannenstiel when he came to the school three years ago.



**Doc D was presented with a team signed helmet following the team's award banquet two years ago.**

"Doc D is the most selfless man I know," Pfannenstiel said. "What Doc gave to this school and community is unprecedented. He cared so much for all of our athletes, there's no way we are going to be able to replace what he brought to this school. I feel bad for whoever is going to come in and try to fill his shoes – he set the bar way too high."

Dennis has been on the sideline for many of Louisburg's greatest athletic achievements, including three state football appearances and has watched many athletes along the way achieve great individual accomplishments.

He knows that he has been blessed to be able to be a part of Wildcat athletics in one form or another the last 28 years.

“As for favorite memories, it is not always about the wins and losses,” Dennis said. “The things I have most enjoyed is the time spent with athletes and coaches. The things that go on in the locker room, before and after games were the fun part. I have had a behind the scenes view of some pretty amazing people.

“Obviously the 2010 state football championship is at the top of the list. We had gone to the championship twice and come home in second on two occasions. It was a great group to be around and a great experience. If I had to choose a group of kids that really stand out the most, it would be the seniors my first year here (class of 1993). They welcomed me with open arms and made me feel like I was appreciated. I still speak to members of that class often and consider them friends. It was a really special group. I also loved seeing kids accomplish their dreams of success. Louisburg has had its share of champions and athletes that have gone on to do some amazing things.”





**Doc D was also good with equipment as he works on Madden Rutherford's helmet prior to a game.**

In his last week at the office, Doc D has seen a lot of visitors that have come to thank him for everything he has done. Although Dennis won't be around as much as he used to, he wants people to know that this isn't a farewell – but more of a see you later.

"I want everyone to know how much I appreciate their kind words," Dennis said. "There has been talk of various activities surrounding my career change that have been proposed. While I genuinely appreciate this, I don't think I can handle the attention. My emotions have gotten the better of me and I am not sure that I can handle any celebrations publicly, unless everyone wants to see me cry.

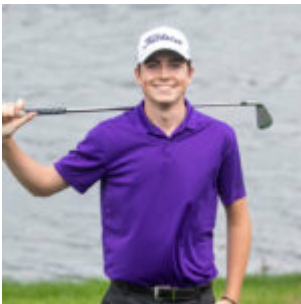
"I am not going away. I just won't be at 11 South Broadway or at the high school every day. Thank you to everyone that has

supported me as I have made every effort to support my community.”

No, Doc – thank you...

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## 2020 Senior Spotlight: Calvin Dillon



*Louisburg Sports Zone will be running senior spotlights through April and May everyday (Monday through Friday) in an effort to honor seniors who had their seasons taken away due to the spread of COVID-19.*

Today was supposed to be the day Calvin Dillon and the rest of the Louisburg golf team took to the course for the regional tournament, as they tried to qualify for their second consecutive state tournament appearance.

It was supposed to be the next step in Dillon's quest for a fourth state medal and a shot at his – and the school's – first state champion in golf. Dillon was one of eight seniors on the team this season and they were ready to go out with a bang.

“I couldn't wait for this season to start,” Dillon said. “We all felt that we could punch another ticket to the state tournament and compete at a high level. With it being our

senior year, we were extremely excited for one last season.”

Instead, Dillon can only be left wondering what could have been. There would be no chance at a fourth state medal, or a shot at a state title – there would be no 2020 season.

The pandemic that is COVID-19 made sure of that as spring sports around the country were cancelled. The opportunity to not be able to compete with his teammates again was a tough one to swallow for Dillon and the rest of the Wildcats.

“A state title was my goal this year,” Dillon said. “Realistically, it’s been my goal every year. I am very happy to have three state medals, and I was ready to have one last go at the state tournament. To not get another shot at it is tough.

“It’s obviously hard. The cancellation of your last and best semester of high school is hard to cope with. But I know that there is more to this life than high school and its activities, although it is disappointing. Ultimately we are on this earth to glorify and serve God. He has a purpose for everything that he does and we need to put our faith in him.”

Golf has been a big part of Dillon’s life since he was young and it has showed during his play in high school and in summer tournaments. With his three state medals, Dillon is the most decorated golfer in Louisburg High School history.

Dillon won a regional title last season and is a two-time Frontier League champion. He has won 17 of the 28 high school tournaments he competed in, and last summer he won the Kansas City Junior Match Play Championship and had a top-10 finish at the Midwest Junior Championship.

His golf career certainly hasn’t ended as he signed with the University of Central Missouri earlier this month and he hopes to play in more amateur tournaments over the summer. It is a sport that helps him put those day-to-day worries behind him.



**Louisburg senior Calvin Dillon had already won three state medals and was ready to help the Wildcats to another state tournament appearance.**

"I have played golf for almost all my life," Dillon said. "My dad put a club in my hand when I was a toddler and it's been all downhill from there. I played in my first tournament when I was seven years old. Golf is a massive part of my life. A lot of my day to day schedule revolves around golf. Whether I'm happy or sad or any mood in between, I can always find joy on a golf course."

Dillon experienced a lot of great moments playing for the Wildcats. Even with all the tournament wins and state medals, there is one moment that will stick with him forever.

"I have made so many good memories with this program and with the golfers in the Frontier League," Dillon said. "I would have to say my favorite, however, was on a weekend match with



Coach (Barry) O'Brien, Drake Varns and Garrett Rolofson. Drake and I were matched up against coach and Rolo in a best ball game at Metcalf Ridge. Drake and I were up by one with two holes to play. The 17th hole at Metcalf was about an 185-yard par 3 that is slightly uphill. Coach threw a dart in there to about six feet and started talking a little bit of trash, about how him and Rolo were about to come back and tie us. The other two hit their shots, neither of them landed on the green. I ended up hitting a four hybrid which was tracking right at the stick.

"As soon as I hit it, I had a feeling it was going to be close, if not in. As we were driving up to the green, Drake says to me, 'I think that's in.' We proceeded to walk up to the hole, and sure enough, I had hit a hole in one, which meant Drake and I had won the match. Coach and Rolo were pretty irritated, but it provided a good laugh for Drake and I."

Other than golf, Louisburg Sports Zone also had a chance to catch up with Calvin on how he has been coping with an early end to his senior year and some of his other interests. Here are his responses from the rest of our Q&A.

**LSZ:** What have you been missing the most during this time away from everyone?

**CD:** I'm missing my friends at school and being able to see my girlfriend. You take for granted the day to day activities you experience and how much fun they actually are. I can't wait to see and talk to everyone once this all settles down.

**LSZ:** What is your most memorable moment as an athlete or in school, and why?

**CD:** My most memorable moment was probably when I signed to play golf at UCM. It was great to have all my friends, coaches and family with me at that moment. The donuts were pretty nice too.

**LSZ:** What is your favorite activity/hobby outside of sports and why?

**CD:** My favorite hobby is playing ping pong. Our administrators put together a 64-person tournament that was a lot of fun. It was a good way for Mr. Hinkle and Mr. Holloway to connect with us students. Now we have occasional weekends where someone invites a bunch of guys over to hang out and play ping pong.

**LSZ:** I know you are planning to go to Central Missouri to play golf next year, but how have you been working on your game during this difficult time?

**CD:** Fortunately, there are a few golf courses still open. When you call to make a tee-time, they have you pay over the phone so there is no money being physically exchanged. Also, they have the holes raised so no one is touching the flagsticks or reaching into the hole to get their ball. I choose to walk so I don't have to touch the steering wheel of a golf cart, although every cart is being sanitized and washed thoroughly after every use.

**LSZ:** What accomplishments that don't involve athletics are you most proud of and why?

**CD:** I would say my greatest accomplishment is probably maintaining a 4.0 GPA throughout high school. We have one semester to go and I hope to hold on to my 4.0. I think it speaks to my hard working character in the classroom and out of the classroom.

**LSZ:** What do you think would be something that a lot of people don't know about you?

**CD:** Something that people probably wouldn't know about me is that my favorite Christmas gift last year was a bottle of Freddy's fry sauce.

## **Calvin's Favorites**

**Pro athlete:** Justin Thomas

**Pro team:** Kansas City Chiefs

**College team:** KU/Central Missouri Mules

**Movie:** Star Wars

**TV Show:** Gilligan's Island

**Song:** Sunflower by Post Malone and Swae Lee

**Band/Musician:** Journey

**Pregame meal/snack:** Beef Jerky

**Class/subject:** Lunch...just kidding...History

**Teacher and why?** O'Brien, because he lets me stop in and watch a few minutes of golf after lunch.

## **Previous Senior Spotlights**

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

Gabby Dugger – Softball

Sydni Keagle – Track

Olivia Chase – Soccer

Colin Cook – Golf

Morgan Messer – Soccer

August Daniels – Softball

Carter Anglin – Track and Field

Hannah Straub – Soccer

Reilly Ratliff-Becher – Softball

Madden Rutherford – Baseball

Lily McDaniel – Soccer

Garrett Harding – Track

Mackenzie Scholtz – Soccer