Eberhart enjoys state experience on Dodge City course



Louisburg senior Johnny Eberhart made the cut at the Class 4A state golf tournament in Dodge City and finished 31st overall with a 172.

One of Johnny Eberhart's goals at the Class 4A Kansas State Golf Championships was just to make the cut and play on that second day.

Eberhart did just that during the 2-day tournament on May 24-25 at Mariah Hills Golf Course in Dodge City. The Louisburg senior made the cut with no problem as he shot on a 85 the first day to stay within striking distance.

"After making cuts and seeing my ranking, I felt happy and relieved to make it to day two and to get another round for my team," Eberhart said. "I didn't let myself play more freely as I wanted to give myself the best shot to move forward as I could, but there was less pressure to perform."

On the second day, Eberhart fired an 87 to give himself a total score of 172. He finished 31st overall and finished just outside of medal contention.

"To be able to compete at state was my dream from the beginning of the season," Eberhart said. "It makes me so proud of our team to be able to play at this tournament."

The Wildcat team qualified for state after their third place finish at regionals, but the other five didn’t see a second day.

Junior A.J. Arriola just missed the cut with a 91. Sam Wheeler was third on the team with a 97 and Johnny Thompson shot a 106.

Jackson Olson and Dacey Wieland rounded out the Wildcat group with a 116 and 119, respectively.

Mariah Hills Golf Course provided a lot of challenges for the Wildcat golfers, none of which had played in a state tournament before this year.

“Mariah Hills was a very nice course, greens were immaculate and the fairways were tight,” Eberhart said. “The course was long but played to my strengths. It was a great course to hold state for 4A.”

Wildcats qualify for state for second consecutive season



The Louisburg golf team (from left) Sam Wheeler, Jackson Olson, A.J. Arriola, Dacey Wieland, Johnny Thompson and Johnny Eberhart finished third on Monday at the Class 4A regional in Independence and qualified for state.

INDEPENDENCE – For the second time in as many seasons, the Louisburg boys golf team is headed to the state tournament.

Except this time, the Wildcat team is made up of a completely new roster.

The Louisburg group of Johnny Eberhart, A.J. Arriola, Johnny Thompson, Sam Wheeler, Dacey Wieland and Jackson Olson shot a 392 to finish third at the Class 4A regional meet at Independence Country Club.

The Wildcats were just three strokes behind runner-up Field Kindley. Independence won the regional title with a 361.

Louisburg last went to state in 2019, but the 2020 season was canceled due to COVID-19.



Senior Johnny Eberhart medaled fourth at regionals last Monday with an 87.

“I am so excited for our team to go to state,” Eberhart said. “We have put in so much time and work into this season and I can’t believe we are going. To me this is one of my favorite high school moments. It will be amazing.”

Eberhart led Louisburg with an 87 and finished fourth overall. After a rough first nine holes, the Louisburg senior bounced back with a strong back nine that was five strokes better.

He also recorded a birdie on the par 4-No. 14, which gave him a little bit of momentum going forward.

“Independence was hard, and it was a grind,” Eberhart said. “The course presented challenges you could not expect and the pins were hard to hit. The hardest part was never playing the course before. The back nine for me just suited my eye. I could play the shots needed and drop putts.”



Louisburg junior A.J. Arriola watches a tee shot during a meet earlier this season.

Junior A.J. Arriola finished just outside of medal contention for Louisburg as he shot a 93 and took 11th overall.

Sam Wheeler was next on the Wildcat team with a 101 and finished 18th. Johnny Thompson was 26th with a 111.

Jackson Olson and Dacey Wieland rounded out the Louisburg lineup with a 123 and 127, respectively.

The Wildcats will travel to Dodge City and Mariah Hills Golf

Course for the two-day state tournament, beginning Monday. Tee time is set for 8:30 a.m.

“My expectations for us to make the cuts to Tuesday and to play the best of our abilities,” Eberhart said. “I have my own personal goals like breaking 86 at this long, long course.”

Wildcat golf third at Prairie View; Eberhart earns medal



Louisburg senior Johnny Eberhart watches a tee shot Thursday during the Prairie View Invitational at Deer Trace Golf Course.

LINN VALLEY – Louisburg seems to be playing some of its best golf of the season and it has shown in their last two meets.

The Wildcats’ latest success came Thursday when they competed at the Prairie View Invitational at Deer Trace Golf Course in Linn Valley.

Louisburg shot a 376 to finished third out of nine teams. Santa Fe Trail won with a 320 and Anderson County was second at 359.

Senior Johnny Eberhart medaled to once again lead the Wildcats. Eberhart carded a 90 to finish in a tie for 10th and

medaled in his second tournament in as many weeks.

Dacey Wieland, another Louisburg senior, shot a 94 to finish 15th overall and second on the team. Junior A.J. Arriola was one stroke behind him with a 95 and was 16th.

Junior Johnny Thompson was 19th with a 97 and sophomore Jackson Olson carded a 100 to take 22nd.



Louisburg senior Dacey Wieland watches his tee shot Thursday at Deer Trace.

Freshman Sam Wheeler rounded out the Louisburg lineup with a 104 in 29th. Santa Fe Trail's Lane Workman won the tournament

title with a 73.

The Prairie View tournament was the final regular season action for the Wildcats before they enter postseason play.

Louisburg travels to Independence for the Class 4A regional tournament at Independence Country Club. Tee time is set for 10 a.m.

Eberhart leads Wildcats at Ottawa

Louisburg senior Johnny Eberhart carded an 83 to finish in a tie for sixth and helped the Wildcats to a fourth place finish at the Ottawa Invitational on May 3.

The Wildcats recorded a 352 at the Great Life and Fitness course in Ottawa. Ottawa won the tournament with a 328 and Anderson County was second with a 344. Tonganoxie was third with a 346.

“Even though the course is pretty wide open, you still have to putt and chip well,” Louisburg coach Brian Burns said. “I was pleased with the scores and know we will do well in our Regionals. Everyone has improved this year, and I am always happy with the season if that is accomplished.”

Senior Dacey Wieland had his best performance of the season with an 88 and finished in a tie for 12th. Junior A.J. Arriola carded a 90 and took 15th.

Junior Johnny Thompson was 17th with a 91 and Sophomore Jackson Olson had a 96 to take 26th. Sam Wheeler had a 106 to finish with a 106.

Week 5 Athlete of the Week: Johnny Eberhart



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week five of the spring sports season, sponsored by Edward Jones- Craig Holtzen.

Johnny Eberhart, Senior, Golf

Louisburg senior Johnny Eberhart put together back-to-back rounds of strong golf last week. Eberhart led the Wildcats at the Osawatomie Invitational and Frontier League Invitational with a pair of top five finishes. On what was a cold, blustery day on the Osawatomie Golf Course last Tuesday, Eberhart carded an 85 to finish second overall.

The next day, Eberhart played on the difficult Sycamore Ridge Golf Course in Spring Hill for the league meet and fired an 86 to medal fourth overall in the Frontier League. His score also helped the Wildcats to a third place league finish, just three strokes behind first.

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday morning during the spring season and the winner is selected by Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.

Previous winners:

Week 1: Lexi Hampton

Week 2: Kolby Kattau

Week 3: Jaden Vohs

Week 4: Mia Wilson

Eberhart leads Wildcat golf with big week at Osawatomie, league meet



Louisburg senior Johnny Eberhart chips onto the green during the Osawatomie Invitational on Wednesday at the Osawatomie Golf Course. Eberhart led the Wildcats with a second place finish at Osawatomie and a fourth-place finish at the Frontier League meet Thursday in Spring Hill.

The Louisburg golf team had back-to-back days of competitions, but that didn't seem to bother the Wildcats much – especially Johnny Eberhart.

Eberhart finished second with an 85 at the Osawatomie Invitational on Wednesday, on what was a cold, blustery day at the Osawatomie Golf Course.

The Louisburg senior followed it up with a fourth-place finish

at the Frontier League Invitational on Thursday at Sycamore Ridge Golf Course with an 86. He was one of three Wildcats to earn league medals.

“Johnny has been able to play more with the good weather and has been more consistent with his shots,” Louisburg coach Brian Burns said. “He is building his muscle memory in his swing and doing better with his short game. I am very pleased with his mid 80’s and wouldn’t be surprised if he scored a low 80s sometime soon.”

As a team, the Wildcats finished third in the league standings with a 371, just three strokes behind league champ Ottawa. Louisburg finished one stroke behind runner-up Tonganoxie.

Junior A.J. Arriola finished right behind with Eberhart for fifth in the league with a 92, while junior Johnny Thompson was seventh with a 94.

Senior Dacey Wieland had his best round of the season with a 99 and took 21st. Sophomore Jackson Olson shot a 105 in 30th and Sam Wheeler was 42nd with a 111.

“I have not had many individual golfers shoot very well at Sycamore,” Burns said. “I was happy with all four of the scores. Three medaling and one breaking 100 for the first time on a difficult course.”

Along with his performance at Sycamore, Thompson also earned a medal at Osawatomie on Wednesday. Thompson shot a 90 to finish ninth overall, while the Wildcats were sixth in the team standings with a 376.

Arriola was third on the team with a 94, while Wheeler shot a 107. Bodie Lancaster and Carson Kern each rounded the Wildcat lineup with a 111.

The Wildcats have the week off, but will back in action next Monday when they travel to the Ottawa Invitational.

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.”

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.

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 his 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.

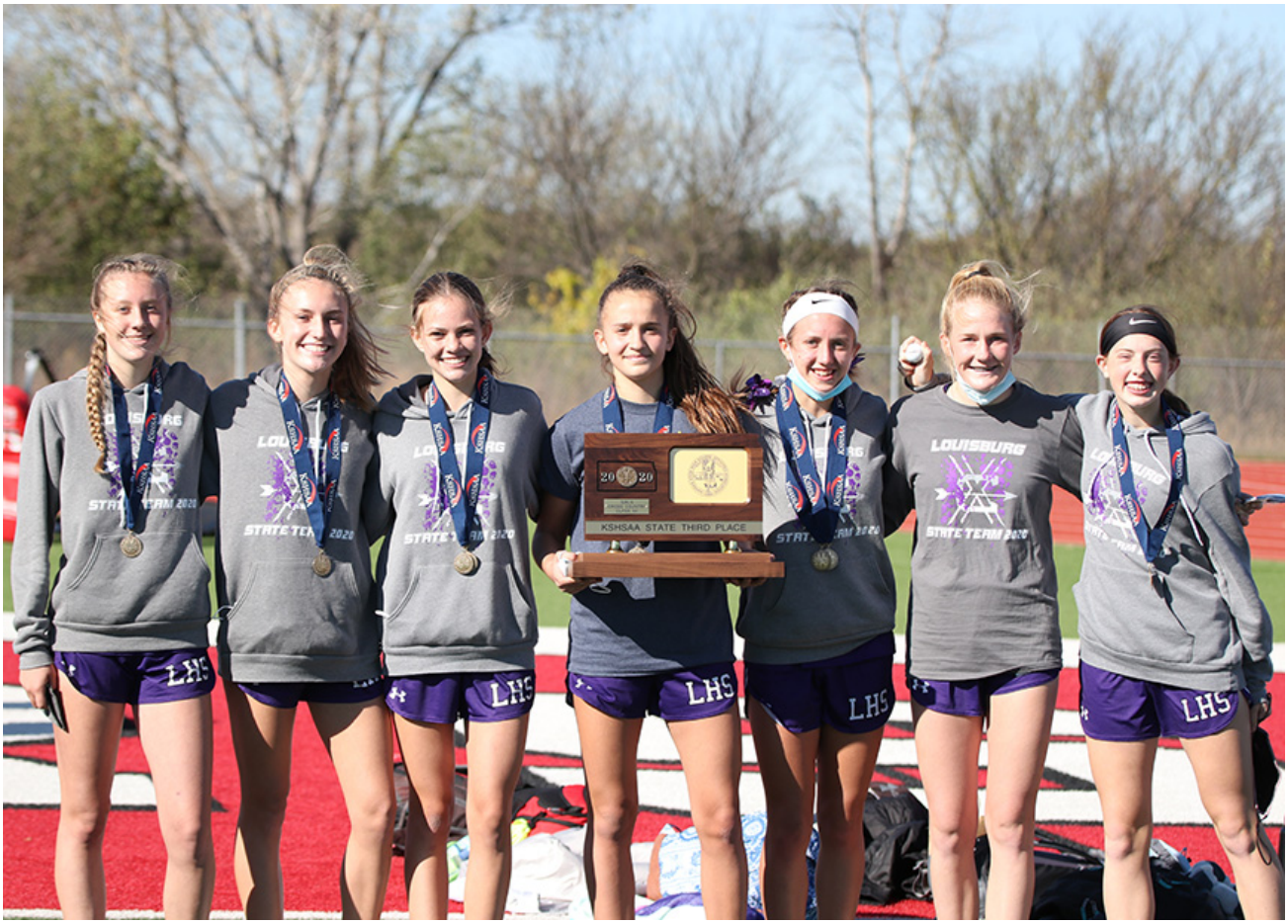
He has taped thousands of ankles, seen even more patients and has touched many lives during his time in Louisburg. That is why this week is one of the more emotional times in his life.

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 its 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.

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."

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.