

Dillon finishes 11th at state to earn second straight medal



Louisburg sophomore Calvin Dillon watches a tee shot during the Class 4A state golf tournament on May 19 in Emporia. Dillon carded a 74 to finish 11th overall and earned a state medal.

EMPORIA – All season, Calvin Dillon had been atop or near the front of leaderboard and that didn't change in what was his biggest tournament of the season.

The Louisburg High School sophomore went up against the state's best during the Class 4A state golf tournament on May 19 at the Emporia Municipal Course and did more than old his own. Dillon earned a state medal as he finished 11th overall with a 3-over par 74.

It was the second consecutive state medal for Dillon after he finished 10th overall last season at Wamego as a freshman.

"It is a real honor to earn another state medal, especially with the quality players that were at the state tournament," Dillon said. "There were lots of good players and lots of good teams."

Andover Central's Keegan Ellington won the tournament with a 2-under 69 and Dillon's cousin, Thomas Dillon, shot a 1-under 70 for Wamego to finish in second.

Calvin Dillon finished in a 6-way tie for ninth and had to play four playoff holes to determine placing and eventually settled for 11th.



Calvin Dillon follows through on his tee shot during the state tournament in Emporia.

Dillon opened the tournament with a pair of birdies on his first two holes to begin the day at 2-under and used that good start to his advantage throughout the competition.

"The two birdies really gave me a lot of confidence throughout the round," Dillon said. "Whenever I got into trouble I reverted my thoughts back to the first two holes and remembered that I just needed to play smart, and good golf would come after that."

He would go on to bogey two holes to finish his first nine

holes at even par, but struggled on the first three holes on the back nine as he recorded a bogey on each, before getting a birdie to get back on track.

"I feel like I played well, especially early in the round," Dillon said. "I was putting very well and got off to a hot start, but started encountering some trouble when my tee ball didn't hit the fairway. The course was very nice, but challenging if you did not hit fairways."

That was the case in Dillon's final hole, as his tee shot landed several feet in front of a group of trees. Dillon was able to put his next shot over the trees in what was a challenging shot that put him near the green, and was able to par the hole.



Louisburg's Calvin Dillon chips onto the green during the state tournament in which he carded a 74.

That shot helped him stay in contention for a top-10 placing and secured another state medal. It was another notch on Dillon's list of accomplishments that included a Frontier League title and six straight tournament victories.

"It was an amazing season and I am proud of everything I accomplished," he said. "I really enjoyed the team chemistry we built this year as well as the player-coach relationships."

Dillon's high school season may be over, but golf is far from being in his rear-view mirror. He recently traveled to Georgia to compete in the Amateur Junior Golf Association preview tournament for players playing in their first AJGA event.

He shot a 70 and finished seventh overall in the tournament that featured players from all over the United States and some international players, as well.

Dillon also has a busy five days with three tournaments this week, including an appearance in the Kansas City Junior Championship and the Konza Prairie Amateur at Colbert Hills in Manhattan.

"I definitely have a lot of events scheduled," Dillon said. "It will be a very busy, but fun summer of competitive golf."

Dillon shoots a 79 to qualify for state a second time



Louisburg sophomore Calvin Dillon watches his tee shot during the Class 4A regional tournament in Garnett last week. Dillon shot a 79 to finish fourth overall and qualified for his second straight state tournament.

GARNETT – On Monday, Calvin Dillon found himself on the same course where he shot a personal best score just a week earlier – Garnett Country Club.

However, this tournament featured much bigger stakes.

Dillon and the rest of the Louisburg golf team competed in the Class 4A regional tournament for the right to make it to state tournament. Although, the Wildcats weren't able to make it as a team, Dillon earned a spot for the second straight season.

The Louisburg sophomore carded a 79 to finish fourth overall and qualified for state as an individual. The top two teams earn a spot in the state tournament along with the top five other individuals.

A week prior, Dillon recorded a 68 on the same course and shot 2-under par, but even though he regressed a little, he is just happy to get back to state.

"I don't really think the course played any differently, but my short game was off," Dillon said. "I couldn't make a putt and didn't get many chips close. But it is nice to be back at state and having a year under my belt will be beneficial."



Senior Justin Sievert chips onto the green last Monday in Garnett.

The Garnett course wasn't very kind to the rest of the Wildcat golfers as they shot 90 and above in their final meet of the season. As team, Louisburg shot a 368 and finished sixth overall. Fort Scott won the regional with a 328 and Ottawa was second with a 331.

"I was disappointed in our overall scored after we played so well at Prairie View four days before that," Louisburg coach Brian Burns said. "We will need to address that next season and learn how to build more confidence in the swing."

Senior Justin Sievert finished second on the team at 17th overall with a 90 and fellow senior Grant Ryals was 26th with a 93. Sophomore Drake Varns (106), senior Parker Perentis (107) and sophomore Ryan Haight (112) rounded out the Wildcat team.



Louisburg senior Grant Ryals tries to chip onto the green during the Class 4A regional

As for Dillon, he will try for another state medal this Monday when he competes at the Class 4A tournament at Emporia Municipal Course. He will tee off at 10:20 a.m. and will start on hole No. 10.

Last season, Dillon shot an 80 at the Wamego Golf Course and took 10th overall and is hoping for even better results this time around.

"I've played Emporia multiple times during past summer golf events," Dillon said. "I also recently practiced there in participation for state. Emporia is different than last year's venue, being a more wide open course so the overall scoring will probably be lower.

"I'm hoping to beat my score of 80 that I posted last year and

that I can finish better than 10th."

Burns believes his No. 1 golfer has a chance to do just that.

"Calvin is hitting the ball great," Burns said. "He shot one under, four over, and two over on our course recently. His driving and putting is great. Hopefully the pitch shots he hits will be closer to give him more of an advantage of getting birdies to get top 10 at the state tournament."

Dillon shoots season best at Garnett, 'Cats second at Prairie View



The Louisburg golf team ended its regular season with a second place finish Thursday at the Prairie View Invitational. Members of the team are (from left) Calvin Dillon, Parker Perentis, Drake Varns, Grant Ryals, Ryan Haight and Justin Sievert.

It was a medal-winning week for Calvin Dillon and the rest of the Louisburg High School golf team as they competed in two different tournaments and put together some of their best scores of the season.

Dillon got it all started Tuesday at the Anderson County Invitational at the Garnett Country Club. The Wildcat sophomore put together his top round of the season as he shot a 2-under par 68 to win the event by three strokes over Spring Hill's Patrick Hartsock.

"I thought I played well at Anderson County," Dillon said. "Every aspect of my game was sharp and it felt great to shoot a low round."

Although the Wildcats didn't place in the top three as a team with a 378, they got some varsity experience from some younger golfers. Deven Wieland (99), Drake Varns (102), Ryan Haight (109) and Gunner Young (109) also competed for Louisburg.

Louisburg turned it around as a team Thursday for the Prairie View Invitational at Deer Trace Golf Course. The Wildcats recorded a 351 to finish second overall, 11 strokes behind Burlington, to capture team medals.

"Thursday was the second best the team has played all year," Louisburg coach Brian Burns said. "I let the guys know how happy it made me, especially after our scores at Anderson County. There were many areas that were lateral hazards and we avoided most of them to keep 4 out of 5 scores at 90, 91, 92 and 93."

Dillon once again led the Wildcats – and once again picked up another tournament win. The Louisburg sophomore carded a 77 to win the tournament by two strokes and picked up his sixth straight victory.

"I did not get off to a very good start (3 over after 2 holes)," Dillon said. "I bounced back with two pars and a birdie and that got me going. I felt like I battled all day and salvaged a good round."

Senior Parker Perentis shot a 90 to finish second on the Wildcat team, while fellow senior Justin Sievert had a 91.

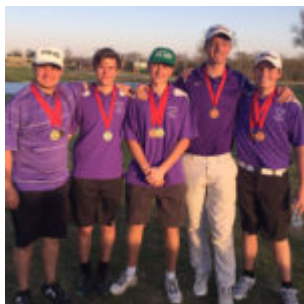
Senior Grant Ryals carded a 92, while sophomores Drake Varns and Ryan Haight shot a 93 and 101, respectively.

Louisburg will begin postseason play Monday when it travels back to Garnett for the Class 4A regional tournament. Tee time is set for 9 a.m. Dillon will try and qualify for his second straight trip to state and hopes his team will be able to go along with him.

"Finishing second gives us confidence heading into regionals," Dillon said. "I think we have a shot to advance to state as a team, but we will have to play well at Garnett. I think our best golf is in front of us and it helps that we played there earlier in the week.

"I'm super excited to play at regionals as a team and individual. My expectations are to concentrate on the next shot and to compete regardless of the circumstances. I hope that the team collectively plays its best golf and we extend the season one more week."

Dillon shoots under par to lead Wildcats at Ottawa



The Louisburg golf team took second place at the Ottawa Invitational on Monday after shooting at 350. Members of the team are (from left) Parker Perentis, Ryan Haight, Drake

Varns, Kai Tinich and Calvin Dillon. Not pictured is Justin Sievert.

OTTAWA – Calvin Dillon has shot some of the best golf of his high school career so far this season.

It got even better Monday.

Dillon, a Louisburg High School sophomore, carded a 1-under-par 70 during the Ottawa Invitational at Ottawa Country Club to win his fourth consecutive tournament and pulled off some spectacular shots to make it happen.

That performance helped the Wildcat golf team to a second place finish as it shot a 350. Ottawa won its home tournament with a 337.

Dillon wasn't the only Wildcat to earn a medal as sophomore Drake Varns earned his first varsity medal as he shot a 90 to finish 10th overall. Varns tied with teammate Parker Perentis, who also carded a 90, but won the tiebreaker for the last medal spot.

Sophomore Ryan Haight ended his round with a 95 to finish fourth on the Wildcat team. Seniors Justin Sievert and Kai Tinich shot a 96 and 100, respectively.

It was a blustery day on the course that saw up to 25 mile-per-hour winds, which was difficult on a lot of golfers and led to a lot of high scores.

Dillon, however, managed to avoid the obstacles and shot the best round of his Wildcat career. He recorded three birdies on the day and also got an eagle on the par 71 course.

"I played very well considering the conditions," Dillon said. "Leading up to this tournament I had been hitting the ball well. Although it was windy, I was confident I could post a

good number.

“The course played difficult because of the windy conditions and the small greens. I knew going in that I would have to rely on my short game. Fortunately, I had good control of my ball flight most of the day and my short game was good.”

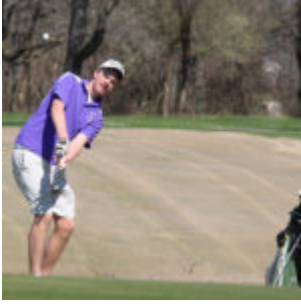
He nearly pulled off the unthinkable on the par-5 No. 9 when he almost recorded a double eagle. Dillon hit his second shot on the fairway that went over the water, onto the green and just a couple inches from the cup where he was able to tap in for eagle.

“My round got jump started on the 8th and 9th hole,” Dillon said. “I made a nice birdie on 8. On the par-5 9th, I decided I would have a go at the green, challenging the water if I put my drive in the fairway. I had 230 yards to the pin with a big crosswind. I hit a 3-wood and it was on a good line. I knew it was on the green, but I could not tell how close it was.”

Louisburg will close out its regular season next week with a pair of tournaments. The Wildcats will travel to Garnett on Tuesday for the Anderson County Invitational and then will play at Prairie View at Deer Trace Golf Club on Thursday.

The Wildcats will then go back to Garnett on May 14 for its regional tournament.

Even with struggles, Dillon wins home invitational



Louisburg senior Kai Tinich chips onto the green Monday during the Louisburg Invitational at Metcalf Ridge Golf Course.

It may have been its home course, but Metcalf Ridge provided all kinds of problems Monday for the Louisburg High School golf team.

Even the Wildcats' No. 1 golfer, Calvin Dillon, encountered some issues on his first nine holes. Despite those issues, Dillon was able to overcome those bumps in the road with a strong back nine.

Dillon shot an even par on his final nine holes and the Louisburg sophomore carded a 77, which was good enough to comfortably win the Louisburg Invitational by four strokes. It was third consecutive tournament win for Dillon.



Calvin Dillon makes a putt on hole No. 18 on Monday during the Louisburg Invitational at Metcalf Ridge Golf Course.

"I know how much it meant to Calvin to win our tournament and I was very proud of him," Louisburg coach Brian Burns said. "Calvin actually struggled some on the course and then came back with even par on the back nine. Our course can be hard if you are hitting it off the mark some."

Dillon shot a 42 on the front nine to put himself in a hole, but he was able to shoot it was out of it on the back nine as he had one birdie that led him to an even par 35.

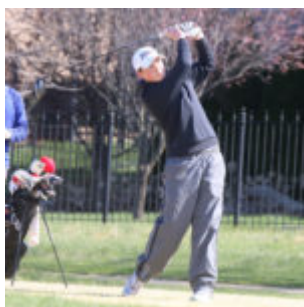
It was a rough outing for the rest of the Wildcats as the next highest score was a 97. Ottawa won the team title and De Soto finished second.

Senior Parker Perentis and sophomore Drake Varns finished second and third on the Wildcat team as each shot a 97. Sophomore Ryan Haight carded a 102, while seniors Justin Sievert and Kai Tinich shot a 106 and 109, respectively.

“You have to be very consistent off the tees or you will be out of bounds,” Burns said. “Playing stroke and distance hurt many of the golfers’ scores, especially with ours. The rest of the season we will be working on shorter back swings for more accuracy, reading greens better, placing pitch shots and 30-100 yard shots.”

Louisburg returns to action Monday when it travels to the Ottawa Invitational. Tee time is set for 2 p.m.

Dillon wins Frontier League golf championship



Louisburg sophomore Calvin Dillon watches a tee shot during the Frontier League Invitational on Thursday at Prairie Highlands Golf Course in Olathe. Dillon carded a 73 to win the tournament by four strokes.

OLATHE – The Louisburg High School golf team spent a lot time on the links last week as the Wildcats took part in three

tournaments.

All the golf didn't seem to bother Calvin Dillon much – in fact – he only got better as the week went along.

Dillon put together his best score of the season Thursday when the Wildcats took part in the Frontier League Invitational at Prairie Highlands Golf Course. The Louisburg sophomore shot a 1-over par 73 to win his first league title and did so by four strokes.

“It feels good,” Dillon said. “Winning league was a goal of mine and all the work I did in the offseason is paying off. My round on Thursday was some of my best golf and I am proud of my score.”

Several other Wildcats shot good scores as senior Justin Sievert had his best round of the season with an 85 and finished eighth for a league medal after he carded a 40 on the back nine.

Senior Parker Perentis recorded a 92 to finish 16th, while sophomore Ryan Haight shot a 96 to come in 22nd. Seniors Kai Tinich (98) and Grant Ryals (103) took 24th and 29th, respectively.



Senior Justin Sievert tees off Thursday during the league tournament at Prairie Highlands. Sievert medaled eighth overall.

Louisburg finished just one stroke from earning a league team medal as the Wildcats took third with a 346. De Soto won the league championship with a 324 and Ottawa was second with a 345.

“As a team we have medaled in three of the four tournaments and our confidence is building,” Dillon said. “Hopefully we can make a run at qualifying as a team for state.”

The league tournament was also held in conjunction with the Spring Hill Invitational and Dillon’s 73 nearly won him that tournament title as well. Dillon finished second out of 92 golfers and was just two strokes behind champion Jackson Likes of Olathe South, who shot a 1-under 71.

Dillon had two birdies on the 18-hole course and was more than familiar with his surroundings as the Wildcats took part in the Gardner Invitational at Prairie Highlands last Monday.

“I felt like the course played easier than Monday,” Dillon said. “I think playing the course earlier helped me when making decisions off the tee.”

Louisburg returns to action today when it hosts the Louisburg Invitational at Metcalf Ridge Golf Course. Tee time is set for 1 p.m.

Dillon wins Osawatomie Invitational, Wildcats take second as team

Calvin Dillon continued the strong start to his season last Tuesday when Louisburg competed in the Osawatomie Invitational.

Dillon carded a 77 to win the tournament by two strokes over Ottawa's Payton Funk and Dillon wasn't the only Wildcat to experience success. Parker Perentis was second on the Wildcat team with a 93 to take 15th and earn a tournament medal.

As a team, the Wildcats shot 366 to finish second overall. Ottawa won the tournament with a 327.



Senior Grant Ryals chips on to the green Tuesday during the Osawatomie Invitational.

Senior Grant Ryals recorded a 97, which was third on the Wildcat team, and sophomore Ryan Haight carded a 99. Justin Sievert (99) and Kai Tinich (105) rounded out the Louisburg squad.

After the front nine, Dillon found himself three strokes back of Spring Hill's Patrick Hartsock, but shot a 38 on the back nine to jump atop the standings.

Dillon, Sievert finish in top 10 at Gardner

Last Monday's Gardner Invitational at Prairie Highlands was just a foreshadowing of what was to come later in the week for

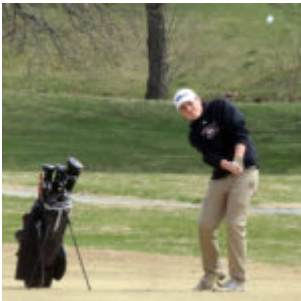
Louisburg.

Calvin Dillon carded a 76 to finish runner-up to lead Louisburg and finished five strokes behind the top spot. Basehor-Linwood's Joey Langstraat shot a 71 to win the tournament.

Senior Justin Sievert recorded an 88 to take 10th, while Ryan Haight and Parker Perentis both shot a 92 to finish 14th and 15th, respectively. Grant Ryals (100) and Kai Tinich (110) took 24th and 35th.

As a team, Louisburg shot a 348 to take third in the team standings. Basehor-Linwood won with a 325 and Bonner Springs was second with a 339.

Dillon wins Paola Invitational, Wildcats take second



Sophomore Calvin Dillon shoots onto the green Monday during the Paola Invitational at Paola Country Club. Dillon won the tournament with a 77 and the Wildcats finished second as a team.

PAOLA – The Louisburg High School golf team had to wait a week to get its season started, but the delay was well worth it.

Sophomore Calvin Dillon won his first meet of the season at the Paola Invitational on Monday at Paola Country Club and he wasn't the only Wildcat to leave with hardware. Senior Parker Perentis finished ninth overall and also earned a medal.

As a team, the Wildcat group of Dillon, Perentis, Justin Sievert, Grant Ryals, Ryan Haight and David Perentis scored a 367, which was good for second in the team standings. Ottawa won the team title with a 333.

Dillon carded a 77 to win the individual crown by four strokes over Ottawa's Isaac Bones, while Perentis shot on an 89 as both scores were vital to helping the Wildcats to that second place spot.

Sievert finished third on the Wildcats squad with a 100, while Haight carded a 101. Ryals and David Perentis rounded out the Louisburg team with a 107 and 109, respectively.

"Having a score of 77 from Calvin and 89 from Parker really helped the second place finish," Louisburg coach Brian Burns said. "We need Parker to stay in the 80's and our other guys to be in the low 90's to be successful the rest of the season no matter what place we get."



Louisburg senior Parker Perentis watches his tee shot sail down the fairway Monday in Paola.

Dillon, who is a returning state medalist, shot a 37 on the front nine to get off to a good start and recorded a 40 on the back. He also birdied hole No. 17 as it was one of the several highlights on the day.

“I played with Calvin last week on six holes and his approaches to the green were slightly off,” Burns said. “However, his short game scrambling for par was great and his one birdie came from being on in regulation on hole 17, a long par three. He shot two over and was not on his best game, but he will be great all season. He is also a good leader for our team.”

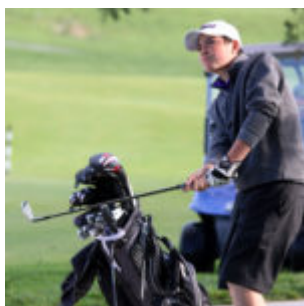
The golfers also had to battle windy, cool conditions on the Paola Country Club course, but for the most part, Burns thought they handled it – and the course –well.

“I made sure the guys wore layers so they wouldn’t have to worry about the cold,” Burns said. “Most of the golfers said they were pretty successful for the most part. If they got in the trees some, that was really the only thing that gave them problems.”

Louisburg will be busy next week as the Wildcats will participate in three tournaments.

The Wildcats will compete in the Gardner Invitational on Monday at Prairie Highlands Golf Course in makeup of an earlier cancellation. Louisburg will then travel to Osawatomie on Tuesday and then back to Prairie Highlands on Thursday for the Frontier League Tournament and Spring Hill Invitational.

Dillon back to lead Wildcat golf after earning state medal



Louisburg sophomore Calvin Dillon, who earned a 10th place finish and a medal at the Class 4A state golf tournament last season, returns to lead the Wildcats as he looks to improve on his first-year performance.

Calvin Dillon walked off the Wamego Country Club course last season as one of the top golfers in the state after he earned a medal following the Class 4A state golf tournament.

Dillon's state medal was the first for Louisburg in several years after he shot an 80 during the 4A tournament that put him in 10th place overall.

Not too bad for a freshman.

Now a sophomore, Dillon is looking for even bigger things this season as he leads the Wildcat golf team into their first tournament Monday at the Gardner Invitational.

"Calvin is very consistent," Louisburg coach Brian Burns said. "He should be shooting in the 70s all year and will have a good season for us."

Although Dillon is cemented as the Wildcats' No. 1 golfer, there has been plenty of competition at practice for the final five varsity spots.

It has been hard for Burns to get a good look at his team as they have only been able to take to their home course at Metcalf Ridge for practice seven times. Despite that, Burns has been able to figure out most of his varsity lineup as seniors Grant Ryals, Justin Sievert and sophomore Ryan Haight will join Dillon.

Louisburg is trying to make up for the loss of Ty Martin, who qualified for state last season, and Burns knows his team has some catching up to do.

"The group is understanding the swing more this year and able to put many parts of it in action," Burns said. "As a team, we still have tons of work to do on the 50 to 150-yard shots. Our daily routine of pitching and putting competitions will help their short game although they must be able to get a feel for the green other than our course before matches start."

The Wildcats have several golfers who are still competing for that fifth and sixth spot, including senior Kai Tinich, who saw varsity action last season. Senior Parker Perentis and sophomore Devin Wieland also are vying for the final two slots.

It is a lineup that could change from week-to-week depending on who performs well in practice and during meets.

“There are so many golfers that are pretty equal this year,” Burns said. “I will have to watch closely this year on who is practicing the hardest, has the best attitude and being the most consistent to find my full varsity team. I know my top four spots, but the last two could be taken by four or five different people, so they will have to have playoffs every week.”

Louisburg opens its Monday when it competes in the Gardner Invitational at Gardner Golf Course and will follow that up with the Paola Invitational on April 9.

Regional assignments were also recently released and the Wildcats will compete at the Anderson County regional at the Garnett Country Club. Other teams at the regional will be Baldwin, Burlington, Fort Scott, Anderson County, Iola, Prairie View, Osawatomie, Ottawa and Paola.

OPINION: 2017 was a banner year for Louisburg



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

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

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

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

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

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

In boys basketball, the Wildcats qualified for the state tournament for the first time in 12 years despite getting knocked out in the first round by defending state champion Bishop Miege.

Most schools would love to have that success with their athletic programs, but for Louisburg, that was just the tip of

the iceberg. As special as the seasons were for those three programs, the Wildcats also thrived in a few other sports.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was an honor for me to cover many of these historic runs in Wildcat history and I hope you all realize how lucky you have it. Louisburg is a school filled with great coaches who care about the student athletes.

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

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

Top 10 Stories of 2017



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

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

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



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

10. Dillon medals at state golf

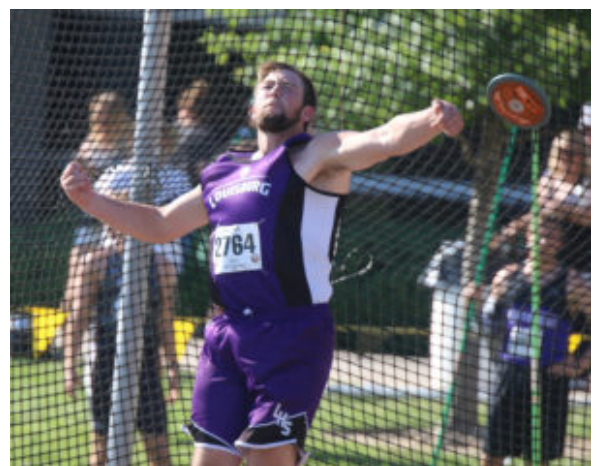
Louisburg freshman Calvin Dillon certainly didn't play like a first-year varsity player as he led the Wildcat golf team all season. Dillon finished 10th at the Class 4A state tournament in Wamego and became the first Wildcat golfer to earn a state medal in several years.

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



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

9. Holtzen, Dover earn first state track medals



T.J. Dover finished eighth

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



7. Louisburg boys soccer wins regional crown

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

5. LHS goes through staff/coaching changes

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

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

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

as the new Wildcat head football coach.

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



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

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

The Louisburg High School cross country team might have had

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



2. LHS girls soccer finishes fourth at state tournament

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

The Lady Cats received several accolades as junior Anna Dixon

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

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