Thank you, Louisburg!



Getting to cover so many great kids was an honor for me, including these guys as they were generous enough to let me in their group picture.

Eleven years ago, I was a nervous wreck.

I had just been laid off from my newspaper job, one where I had spent seven years covering Louisburg. Like so many others in this profession, I suddenly found myself staring at an uncertain future as newspapers continued to disappear. Jobs were scarce. Stability was gone. And I had a family to support.

I knew I was probably going to have to take a job I didn't want – something far from journalism – just to make ends meet.

Then an idea hit me.

With news media shifting more and more online, I wondered: *Would Louisburg support something like this?* Would the community care enough about local sports to follow an independent site dedicated solely to their athletes?

As it turned out, the answer was an overwhelming yes.

Because of the relationships I had built during my first seven years here, there was an appetite from local businesses to support the idea – and many of them never wavered. Eleven years later, a lot of those same businesses were still standing beside Louisburg Sports Zone, believing it was an important piece of the community.

They were right – and I couldn't agree more.

This past decade-plus has been some of the best years of my life. Through Louisburg Sports Zone, I formed incredible relationships with coaches, athletes, administrators, parents and community members. Even as a graduate of rival Paola, the Louisburg community adopted me as one of their own.

For those of you around my age or older, this might resonate.

I often felt like *Norm* from *Cheers*.

Every time I walked into a gym, stadium or field, I'd hear, "Hey Andy!" or "Thanks for coming!" or "We appreciate you." So many people knew my name – even people I didn't know – simply because they appreciated what I did.

Instead of an icy cold glass in my hand, I carried a camera. My barstool wasn't at a counter – it was on the sideline, capturing moments as they happened. And there were plenty of them.

State championships. State tournament appearances. Individual champions and medalists. Record-breaking performances.

I was lucky enough to see it all.

But my favorite part was always watching kids grow – seeing freshmen mature into seniors and leave as confident, capable young adults. That transformation never got old.

My very first event as Louisburg Sports Zone was a home basketball game. I was only a couple months removed from being laid off and still unsure if this idea would work or if anyone would even care.

Those worries disappeared quickly.

As I walked into the gym, Natalie Moore, Kirstin Lowry and Kallie O’Keefe stopped their warmups to smile and wave. Coach Shawn Lowry walked clear across the court to shake my hand and welcome me back.

More than a decade later, I still get those same smiles from athletes and handshakes from coaches and parents alike. Those connections are what made this decision so difficult.



Was fortunate to interview so many student athletes these last 11 years.

Six months ago, I was offered a position with KSHSAA Covered and the Kansas High School Activities Association. Honestly, I

never thought I’d have another writing job outside of Louisburg Sports Zone. I fully intended to keep doing this until the appetite for it simply wasn’t there anymore.

But the opportunity was too good to pass up – and it was the right move for my family.

I knew the connections wouldn’t be the same. Starting over is hard, especially when you know what you’re leaving behind. My favorite part of this job was feeling the appreciation from the community and knowing I was giving people something positive to read.

I wasn’t perfect. I made mistakes along the way. But this community allowed me to grow – as a writer, photographer and a person. I always tried to do the best I could and to cover every sport as fairly and equally as possible.

The last five or six years put me in an interesting position, as my own kids were playing varsity sports. How do you balance being a supportive dad and a journalist at the same time? I hope I did it right.

One of the biggest perks of this job was getting to write about my kids – their first varsity goal, first basket, first shutout or a big volleyball performance. I know how lucky I was to experience that.

None of this would have been possible without my family – especially my wife, Jennifer. I wasn’t home much in the evenings, especially with young kids, and that wasn’t easy. She never stopped supporting me.



It was awesome to have my family with me as I was surprised with Louisburg Citizen of the Year a few years ago.

To my kids – Jordan, Ally and Carter – thank you for understanding the crazy hours and for supporting me even when

I couldn’t be at everything like other parents. I love you more than you know.

I also want to thank all of my advertisers, past and present. Louisburg Sports Zone doesn’t exist without you. Craig Holtzen and Edward Jones, Dixon Contracting Services, White’s Automotive, Prime Accounting Services, Amborn Stone, Wildcat Vet Clinic, Dr. Andy Hill, Destination Fun Travel, Vance Brothers, Go Brolly, First National Bank, First Option Bank, Landmark Bank, Dr. Laura’s Orthodontics, IronHorse Family and Cosmetic Dentistry, Louisburg Family Dental, Vohs Pharmacy, Elliott Insurance, Magnum Equipment, Louisburg Athletic Club, Louisburg Library, Tri-County Pest, Midwest Collision – and so many others along the way.

I also wanted to give a big shoutout to a Louisburg graduate – Kenneth Sweeney. He has been my “web guy” this whole time. He helped design the site and has also been there to help me troubleshoot what problems have come up since then. I couldn’t have done it without him.

Thank you to every coach I’ve worked with. Getting to know you and promote your programs has truly been an honor. I appreciate you enduring my countless emails that I send out every week. You have helped make Louisburg Sports Zone what it is as well. I will miss you all.

And finally, the student-athletes – you are the reason this worked. Thank you for letting me into your lives and giving me so many incredible stories to tell. And consider this a long-overdue apology to anyone I ever did “dirty” with an unfortunate action photo.

So here I am, 11 years later, feeling some of those same nerves as I move into something new. The last six months with KSHSAA Covered have been great, and I’ve been welcomed with open arms.

Still, walking away from something I built was not easy.

I only hope that Louisburg Sports Zone has been as much of a blessing to you as it has been to me. These have been some of the best times of my life – and I will treasure them always.

Thank you, Louisburg.

Q&A: Information on vote for potential baseball/softball fields



Voters in the Louisburg school district will head to the polls Nov. 4 to decide whether to approve a bond measure that would fund the construction of new baseball and softball fields for Louisburg High School. The proposal has generated plenty of discussion in the community, with supporters citing the need for modern, on-campus facilities and opponents raising questions about costs and priorities.

On the ballot is a vote for new multipurpose baseball and softball fields. USD 416 is proposing to add two new multipurpose fields to the existing infrastructure and upgrade

the two current fields.

To learn more about what's at stake, Louisburg Sports Zone spoke with Superintendent Dr. Brian Biermann (BB), school board member Jo Erin Stuteville (JS), and head baseball coach Kade Larson (KL) about the details of the project, why it's being proposed, and what it could mean for students and the community moving forward.

LSZ: What Does This Project Entail?

JS: Two new fields will be added between the high school and middle school. Upgrades will also be made to the current practice fields south of Wildcat Drive, transforming them into competition fields for JV games with dugouts, bleachers, and ADA accessibility.

The varsity fields will be equipped with low-impact sports lighting that directs all light onto the field to reduce any impact on nearby residents. The two new fields will be fully turfed, while the two JV fields will remain natural grass surfaces.

As an effort to keep the project cost as low as possible, this plan allows use of the current parking lots at the middle school as well as the high school staff parking lot. Restrooms and concessions in the middle school will be utilized, eliminating the need for additional electrical or plumbing costs since these facilities are already in place.

LSZ: How Will These Fields Benefit the Community?

KL: These multipurpose fields will serve far more than just the LHS baseball and softball teams.

The LHS Band and Dance Team are especially excited about the new turf space, which will give them a consistent, dry, and level surface for practice – no more dodging soggy, uneven grass or walking to the stadium and wasting valuable practice

time.

The PE Departments at both LHS and LMS will also benefit, as every student from sixth through ninth grade will have access to these fields during physical education classes. The middle school and high school football teams can use the space for practices when the stadium is occupied by other events.

The fields can also be utilized for LRC sports, providing additional space for baseball and tee-ball games, as well as opportunities to mark temporary lines in the outfields for soccer, flag football, and other community sports.

Currently, the LHS baseball and softball teams practice at the fields south of Wildcat Drive and play their home games at Lewis-Young Park. The new fields would allow teams to practice and compete in the same location. Presently, baseball doubleheaders require splitting coaching staff because JV and varsity cannot play simultaneously at Lewis-Young.

Additionally, the current practice fields often become unplayable for days at a time due to rain, forcing teams indoors. The lack of shelter at Lewis-Young also poses safety concerns during sudden storms. Bussing students back and forth adds another logistical challenge and cost.

LSZ: How Will This Be Funded?

JS: USD 416 will enter into a 10-year lease-purchase agreement to fund the project, with payments made through the Capital Outlay Fund. The district secured a highly competitive interest rate of 4.24 percent, with no prepayment penalty, and has applied for grants to help offset costs. The district anticipates paying off the loan in as little as seven years, which would reduce overall interest expense.

LSZ: Why Is Now a Good Time to Take On This Project?

BB: This project will be funded with no increase to the mill rate – meaning property taxes will not rise because of it. The Board of Education understands concerns about rising taxes and has created a fiscal plan to fund the project using the existing 8-mill Capital Outlay Fund, which cannot legally be increased beyond 8 mills.

LSZ: Why Turf Instead of Natural Grass for the Two Varsity Fields?

JS: Simply put, turf allows for maximum usage. As long as it's not raining or storming, the fields can be used.

Financially, turf makes long-term sense. The district installed turf at the football stadium in 2019, covering about 96,000 square feet. That field costs approximately $2,500 per year to maintain. If it had remained grass, maintenance would run closer to $35,000 per year for mowing, fertilizing, watering, spraying, and general upkeep.

The two new turf fields will cover about 160,000 square feet (1.67 times larger) at a cost of just over $700,000. With a minimum 15-year life expectancy and a full 8-year warranty, the investment is sound. Maintenance and insurance combined are estimated at $6,000 per year, roughly equal to what the district currently spends maintaining that same area in its existing condition.

LSZ: Why Not Upgrade the Fields at Lewis-Young Park Instead?

BB: There are several issues with that option. First is ownership – The Lewis-Young fields are owned by the City of Louisburg. Roughly half of the USD 416 tax base resides outside city limits, meaning district funds would be used to upgrade city-owned property.

Second, there are legal restrictions – The Kansas Attorney General has stated that school districts cannot use Capital

Outlay Funds to improve facilities they do not own.

Third, is a bond limitation. The only way to use district funds at Lewis-Young would be through a bond issue, which would increase the mill levy for all citizens.

Who Can Vote on This?

KL: Anyone residing within the USD 416 District is eligible to vote – it is not limited to Louisburg city residents.

A "Yes" vote on November 4th will allow the district to move forward with building these multipurpose baseball and softball fields and upgrading the existing fields south of Wildcat Drive.

2025 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year finalists



Louisburg seniors Ally Brown, Sabra Brueggen and Addy Stohs were named as finalists for the Louisburg Sport Zone Female Athlete of the Year.

For the eighth consecutive 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."

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. Then I sent the nominations back to the coaches and they voted for their top 3 male and female athletes. The recipient will be announced in the coming days.

(Editor's Note: Normally, the coaches send me their votes and I tabulate the winner. However, due to a conflict of interest, I handed those duties to LHS AD Ty Pfannenstiel this year and he graciously gathered all the votes from the coaches and I was not a part of the process.)

Below are the three finalists for the Female Athlete of the Year award in alphabetical order by last name.



Ally Brown – Senior – Volleyball, Basketball, Soccer

Ally was a 3-time letterwinner this past season in volleyball, basketball and soccer. In volleyball, Brown earned honorable mention all-league honors for her work as a defensive specialist as she helped the Wildcats to the sub-state championship game. She finished with 228 digs, which was second on the team and was also second in aces with 47. She led Louisburg in serve attempts and points scored while she was serving.

On the basketball court, Brown was a starter for the Wildcat basketball team and averaged four points a game. She also led the team in assists (35) and steals (24).

Brown joined the Wildcat soccer team for the first time in the spring and made the most of her opportunity. She started in

goal and finished with 12 shutouts on the season as she helped the Wildcats to a fourth-place finish at the Class 4-1A state tournament and finished with a 16-5 record. Brown was also named second team All-Frontier League goalie as she had more than 80 saves on the year and had an 87 percent save percentage.



Sabra Brueggen – Senior – Basketball, Swim

Sabra was a letterwinner for the Louisburg basketball and swim team this year. On the basketball court, Brueggen was a starter for the Lady Cats as she was third on the team with 85 rebounds on the year and averaged five points a contest.

Brueggen really made her mark in the pool as she earned two medals at the Class 5-1A state swim meet this spring. She medaled sixth in both the 200-yard individual medley and 100

backstroke. Throughout the season, Brueggen earned state qualifying times in all of the individual events and she also qualified in three relays.

She swam in two of those relays at the state meet as she helped the 200 freestyle relay to victory in the consolation finals and finished ninth overall. Brueggen also swam the 400 free relay as they took 13th. Overall, Brueggen earned at least one state medal in each of her four years with the program.



Addy Stohs – Senior – Basketball, Softball

Addy was a letterwinner for the Louisburg basketball and softball teams. It was in softball where Stohs made her biggest mark. The Louisburg senior was named to the All-Frontier League first team after strong season as the team's

first baseman.

Stohs had a big year at the plate for Louisburg as she had a .435 average, which included 27 hits, four doubles and a home run, to go along with 13 RBIs. Stohs also had a .950 fielding percentage and only had 3 errors on the year.

On the basketball court, Stohs was a forward for the Wildcats as she had 23 rebounds on the year to go along with 10 blocked shots.

Wildcat softball earns 3 spots on all-league team



Louisburg's Addy Stohs, Brynley Bauer and Shyloh Waite were recently named to the All-Frontier League team.

It wasn't the season the Louisburg softball team was hoping for as the Wildcats battled through a 3-23 campaign and just missed out on the playoffs.

When it came down to postseason honors, the Frontier League coaches recognized three Wildcat players for their efforts. Senior Addy Stohs was named as a first team selection, while senior Brynley Bauer and junior Shyloh Waite were honorable mention selections.

“I think we had great representation on the all-league team,” Louisburg coach Nick Chapman said. “This season was a learning opportunity for players and coaches. We didn’t have the success in the win column that I would like but we got better everyday and you could see that in how we played.”

Stohs earned first team honors as the team’s starting first baseman and did so thanks to her work with the bat and the glove. She finished with a .435 average on the season to go along with 27 hits.

She recorded four doubles, a home run and had 13 RBIs. She was also strong in the field as she only posted three errors.

“I was ecstatic for Addy,” Chapman said. “She deserves to be recognized as one of the best infielders in the league. Every coach voted for her and that is just a testament to truly how great of a first baseman she was. She was consistent at the plate, limited her errors and just an overall great leader. I’m so proud of her and all of these girls.”

Bauer was busy behind the plate as she caught most of the team’s 26 games, including several doubleheaders, as she was named an honorable mention catcher.

She was also one of the team’s top bats as she batted in the middle of the order. Bauer had a .469 average and had more than 30 hits.

“Brynley got a nod for honorable mention catcher and she deserved that,” Chapman said. “She worked her butt off behind the plate, sometimes catching 2 games a night and having some really great nights at the plate.”

As for Waite, she started the season on the infield, but eventually moved to centerfield to help out the Wildcat defense and earned honorable mention honors for her work in the outfield.

Waite also batted at the top of the lineup and hit .274 with nearly 20 hits on the season and four doubles.

“I nominated Shyloh because she came in being forced to play shortstop and she accepted it,” Chapman said. “ Even when I asked her if she wanted to switch back she said no; she wanted to keep learning. Ultimately I made the decision to move her back to the outfield and you could see all the confidence come back to her and she picked right back up where she left off last year.

“She is a great example of doing whatever the team needed her to do, without complaints and I’m so proud how she responded and bounced back to have a pretty good season.”



Photo courtesy of Lorrie Cook
(From left) Addy Stohs, Emily Brotherton, Brynley Bauer and Katie McKain were all honored during a Senior Nigh Ceremony last month.

Following their final game of the season in a home loss to Baldwin, the Wildcats celebrated Senior Night as they honored Stohs, Bauer, Katie McKain and Emily Brotherton. It was a memorable night despite the outcome.

“This senior class was incredible,” Chapman said. “In my time, we haven’t had a senior class who has stepped up and truly led. They led by their actions on the field and in practice. They led by holding girls accountable and they just wanted to have an enjoyable senior year with no drama. They exceeded my expectations and they are going to be very missed. They are leaving behind a legacy that I hope future softball players want to continue.”

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE SOFTBALL

FIRST TEAM

CATCHER: Reese Pattison, Eudora, senior

PITCHER: Samantha Claire, Eudora, senior; Jaileigh White, Spring Hill, senior; Aubrey Prickett, Tonganoxie, junior

INFIELD: Katie Courter, Eudora, senior; Addy Stohs, Louisburg, senior; Emma Reeves, Spring Hill, senior; Emerson Maslak, Tonganoxie, junior

OUTFIELD: Krislyn Hadlock, Paola, senior; Alexia Born, Eudora, senior; Quinn Thomson, Spring Hill, senior

DH/UTILITY: Nora Burrell, Spring Hill, senior

SECOND TEAM

CATCHER: Emma Lara, Bonner Springs, senior

PITCHER: Jayden Kistner, Spring Hill, junior; Emmi Morris, Paola, senior; Ava Regalado, Baldwin, freshman

INFIELD: Rylee Bentley, Baldwin, junior; Olivia Fraley, Spring Hill, junior; Kaylin Wiehe, Tonganoxie, sophomore; Jaiden Burris, Eudora, senior

OUTFIELD: Ava Anderson, Bonner Springs, senior; Alyssa Schoeneck, Tonganoxie, junior; Logyn Scoby, Baldwin, freshman

DH/UTILITY: Farrah Halsa, Tongnanoxie, junior

HONORABLE MENTION

CATCHER: Kylee Putthoff, Tonganoxie, junior; Brynley Bauer, Louisburg, senior; Kaitlin Base, Baldwin, senior

PITCHER: Olivia O’Toole, Eudora, junior; Delanie Krebs, Bonner Springs, senior; Piper Zink, Ottawa, freshman

INFIELD: Macie Gilges, Baldwin, freshman; Lori Brooks, Eudora, sophomore; Maddy Arnold, Eudora, senior; Kirby Evans, Ottawa, freshman; Elli Smail, Paola, junior; Addison White, Ottawa, senior

OUTFIELD: Shyloh Waite, Louisburg, junior; Ainsly Michel, Ottawa, junior; Ellie Ruffin, Spring Hill, senior; Brielle Garcia, Paola, sophomore;

DH/UTILITY: Campbell Mermis, Spring Hill, senior; Rylee Zimmerman, Paola, sophomore

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Wildcat softball stops losing skid with split of Anderson County



Louisburg senior Addy Stohs is surrounded by her teammates after her first inning home run on May 1 in the doubleheader opener against Anderson County.

The Louisburg softball team has had some rough patches so far this season, however the May 1 doubleheader opener against Anderson County wasn't one of them.

Louisburg snapped a four-game losing streak as the Wildcats earned a 10-7 victory over Anderson County at Lewis-Young Park. The Wildcats put together a strong performance, especially at the plate.

Senior Addy Stohs led the charge as she got the Wildcats going in the first inning. After walk by Shyloh Waite and a double from McKinley Harmon, Stohs launched a 3-run home run over the left field fence.

The Wildcats took a 3-0 lead – one they wouldn't relinquish.

"I'm really glad we picked up a win on Thursday night,"

Louisburg coach Nick Chapman said. “We needed it. Still not pretty, but these girls are working to be better everyday and I’m super proud to be their coach.

“Addy has been such a great leader and consistent force on our team. She is fantastic on defense and one of strongest bats. I know she has been searching for that home run all season. I’m so proud of her growth and what she means to our team.”



Freshman Lydia Copeland made it a 5-run lead with a two-run do

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Senior Brynley Bauer singled to score Harmon, while Hathaway scored Stohs on a fielder's choice. Keagle then singled home pinch-runner Camryn Lane and Katie McKain singled in Emily Brotherton to make it a 9-0 advantage.

Anderson County made things interesting with two runs in the fifth, four in the sixth and another in the seventh, but the Wildcats were able to hold on.

Louisburg junior pitcher Paytyn Van Tyle had a big day on the mound. Not only did she pick up the victory, Van Tyle also recorded a season-high 11 strikeouts.



Louisburg junior Paytyn Van Tyle struck out 11 batters against Anderson County on May 1 at Lewis-Young Park.

"Paytyn is a solid force on the mound," Chapman said. "She makes teams work for their hits and keeps them off balance. She gets our defense the routine play balls. Eleven strikeouts

is huge. She has gotten better each game she has pitched. I'm proud of where she is at and where she is going to be as we finish this season off."

The second game didn't go as planned for the Wildcats as they dropped the final contest, 9-5, to record a split.

The Wildcats took a 3-0 lead in the first inning once again as Stohs doubled home Waite and then scored on a wild pitch. Hathaway then singled home pinch-runner Hannah Basore.

Louisburg (3-17) had the lead until the fifth when Anderson County tied the game with three runs of its own and then scored six more in the sixth.

Hathaway finished strong at the plate as she had four hits and 2 RBIs, while Bauer added three. Brotherton and Keagle also had two hits a piece, while Harmon and Stohs had an RBI.

Louisburg returns to action on May 6 as the Wildcats travel to Eudora for a single game. First pitch is set for 6 p.m.

Wildcats drop home game to Chanute

In what was a rare Saturday game, Louisburg hosted Chanute as the Wildcats hoped to get back in the win column.

Unfortunately, Chanute had other plans. The Blue Comets struck early and held on for a 6-2 victory over the Wildcats.

"I thought we played fine," Chapman said. "We just had an inning that we let get away a little bit. We had a tough time staying consistent at the plate and Chanute capitalized. That's what happens. We had some solid innings on defense.

"McKinley is staying real consistent at the plate. She had a solid game. Addy had another good game. The bottom of our lineup is starting to get more and more consistent. I know we aren't winning games, but from where we started against

Frontenac until now, we are two different teams. I’m so proud of our progress. Our program is getting better and the wins will come.”

Week 4 Athlete of the Week: Brynley Bauer



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week four of the spring sports season, sponsored by Dr. Laura’s Orthodontics.

BRYNLEY BAUER, SENIOR, SOFTBALL

Louisburg senior Brynley Bauer has been one of the Wildcats’ most consistent hitters all season and that continued last

week as she helped Louisburg to a victory over Bonner Springs. In the win, she had three hits and 3 RBIs in the 8-5 victory over the Braves.

On the season, Bauer is toward the top on the team with a .429 batting average and has a team-high 10 RBIs. Bauer is also the team's starting catcher and has caught 14 of the team's 15 games this year.

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: Luke Schultz

Week 2: Faith Sewell

Week 3: Meade Rutherford



Hathaway homers, earns win to help Wildcats to split of Bonner



Louisburg freshman Annabelle Hathaway homered and got the win as a starter as she helped the Wildcats to an 8-5 win over Bonner Springs on April 15 at Lewis-Young Park.

It wasn't the start the Louisburg softball team was hoping for to its season, but things are starting to change for the better.

After losing their first nine games to start the year, the Wildcats have now won two of their last four, which included an 8-5 victory over Bonner Springs in the second game of a

doubleheader on April 15 at Lewis-Young Park.

The victory came after losing the first game, 6-3, but the Wildcats didn't let the one loss hamper them.

"I'm so dang proud of this team," Louisburg coach Nick Chapman said. "I've told them everyday this season, that my expectation is that we are getting better than the day before. This team is doing that. Every game we have played, we have gotten better.

Freshman Annabelle Hathaway came up big for the Wildcats in their latest victory as she contributed on the mound and at the plate.

Hathaway pitched a complete game and gave up just three earned runs on nine hits and struck out three. She also tallied one of the biggest hits of the game.

With Louisburg up two runs in the bottom of

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“Annabelle had a heck of a game,” Chapman said. “She kept girls off balance and got some weak hits for our defense. She stayed calm through adversity and her defense had her back. It was a solid defensive game for us, all led by our freshman pitcher.

“Then she had a big game at the plate. She found her groove again after struggling against Wellsville. I’m very proud of how she made adjustments and had a great night. Her at bat where she hit a bomb was solid. She had to fight for that pitch she got. With two strikes, she had to battle and foul off some pitches and then finally let one rip.”

The rest of the offense followed suit as seven Wildcats had multi-hit games, including a 3-hit performance from seniors Brynley Bauer and Addy Stohs. Bauer drove home a pair of runs and Stohs recorded an RBI single.



Louisburg senior Emily Brotherton throws out a runner from second during the Wildcats' April 15 home game against Bonner Springs.

Sophomore McKinley Harmon, senior Emily Brotherton, junior Raeya Keagle and Hathaway each had two hits. Harmon and junior Shyloh Waite both had a double.

Senior Katie McKain, Brotherton and Harmon each had a run batted in.

The Wildcats also played strong defense behind Hathaway, which included a diving catch by Waite in centerfield that ended up saving a run early in the game.

In the opener, Bonner Springs began the game with three runs in the first, but the Wildcats responded with two of their own. The Braves added a run in the fourth, fifth and seventh innings to take a 6-2 advantage.

Harmon, Hathaway and Brotherton each had two hits to lead the

Wildcats, while Bauer had two runs batted in. Hannah Basore recorded an RBI single in the seventh.

Louisburg (2-11) will try for back-to-back wins tonight as it hosts Tonganoxie for a single game at Lewis-Young Park. First pitch is set for 6 p.m.

“I’m really proud of our team,” Chapman said. “Our record doesn’t reflect our growth in the first half of our season. We are settling in and figuring out who we are, what we are good at and what we need to keep working at. I believe in these girls and I can’t wait for the back half of this season.”

Louisburg softball picks up first win of season with split of Wellsville



Louisburg's McKinley Harmon celebrates with coach Nick Chapman after a big hit during a game earlier this season. The Wildcats defeated Wellsville, 9-7, to get their first win of the season.

WELLSVILLE – In what started out as a rough week for the Louisburg softball team, ended with the brightest spot of the season to date for the Wildcats.

Louisburg picked up its first win of the season on April 10 as the Wildcats traveled to Wellsville for a doubleheader. The Wildcats got the best of the Eagles in the first game as they held on for a 9-7 victory.

Although Louisburg fell 11-0 in the nightcap, the win in game one was exactly what the Wildcats needed after losing three games earlier in the week.

"That win was huge for us," Louisburg coach Nick Chapman said. "We had a long, tough week. We dropped a close one to Baldwin to start the week. We hit the ball real well that night, but

it came down to us being able to make plays when we needed it and we just didn't. We couldn't put them away and Baldwin did a great job capitalizing on our mistakes. I think we used that as fuel to finish our game on Thursday night.

"We went and played a really good Spring Hill team on Tuesday, then went out to Wellsville. Everything was on the road. The girls came out after all that and put together a great offensive show. We played the best defense we have all year and found a way to put one in the win column. I'm very proud of how they responded to a tough week and put a complete game together, as a team."

The Wildcats scored five runs in the first three innings to take a a 5-4 lead going into the fifth. Wellsville scored a run to tie it in the bottom of the fifth.

Louisburg used a 4-run sixth inning to get back out to a big lead. The Wildcats took advantage of three Wellsville errors in the inning to go up 9-5.

Wellsville rallied in the bottom of th

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Louisburg junior Paytyn Van Tyle earned the complete game victory as she recorded six strikeouts and just two earned runs.

“Paytyn threw really well all week and against Wellsville was no different,” Chapman said. “She struck out 6 and forced them to put the ball in play. She caused a lot of weak hits with how well she can locate a pitch and change up timing of hitters. Our defense was focused on having her back and one of our goals was no snowball innings and we accomplished that.”

The Wildcats got production from up and down their lineup and were led by a two seniors. Addy Stohs and Brynley Bauer each had three hits to lead the attack, while Bauer had 3 RBIs.

Senior Emily Brotherton had 2 RBIs, while Shyloh Waite and McKinley Harmon each had two hits. Harmon and Lydia Copeland each had a double.

“The stats don’t show it, but Addy has been seeing the ball real well,” Chapman said. “She is consistently hitting the ball hard all over the field. She can also move baserunners real well with a well timed bunt. She has a lot of skills that make her a dangerous threat every at-bat.

“Brynley has been a consistent force at the plate. When we need a big time hit, she’s got it. With her in the 5 spot, she clears the bases pretty well but she can also be a great leadoff when we need it.”

In the second game, the Wildcats managed jut three hits, while Wellsville scored 11 runs in the first four innings to prevent the sweep.

Louisburg will try to build on the victory as the Wildcats host Bonner Springs for a doubleheader on April 15, then a single game against Tonganoxie on April 17.

“Our girls needed to feel what winning was like and put that in the experience bank,” Chapman said. “We have a week where we can keep that confidence and continue to build on our success to bank some more positives as we get to the end of April.”

Wildcats fall to Baldwin, Spring Hill

Louisburg was just a couple innings away from getting that first win of the season on April 7 as the Wildcats traveled to Baldwin for a single game with the Bulldogs.

Louisburg took a 9-run lead into the bottom of the fifth, but Baldwin scored 10 in the final three innings, including six in the fifth to defeat the Wildcats in walk-off fashion, 12-11.

The Wildcat offense had one of its best days of the season as they pounded out 23 hits on the night as eight of the nine batters in the lineup had a multi-hit game.

Emily Brotherton led the way with four hits, including a double. McKinley Harmon, Annabelle Hathaway, Brynley Bauer and Katie McKain each had three hits. McKain and Hathaway had a triple and 2 RBIs, while Harmon and Bauer doubled.

Raeya Keagle led the team with 3 RBIs and a double. Paytyn Van Tyle also had two hits, 2 RBIs and a double, while Addy Stohs added a pair hits.

On April 8, the Wildcats faced one of the top teams in the state in Spring Hill. Louisburg left Spring Hill with a pair of 12-0 and 23-1 losses.

Wildcats’ rally falls short in doubleheader loss to

Ottawa



Louisburg junior Shyloh Waite slides safely into second base Thursday against Ottawa at Lewis-Young Park. The Wildcats lost the doubleheader, 7-6 and 12-2.

It has been a tough start for the Louisburg softball team as its schedule hasn't let the Wildcats ease into the season.

Louisburg opened against a 3A state power in Frontenac and a challenging Fort Scott Tournament field that left the Wildcats with four straight losses to open the year.

Those setbacks didn't get the Wildcats down as they hosted Ottawa in its home opener Thursday at Lewis-Young Park. Although they lost both games, the Wildcats nearly pulled off a big comeback in game one in a 7-6 loss.

Louisburg fell in the nightcap, 12-2, but Wildcat coach Nick Chapman saw a lot of positives from his young team.

“The road has been pretty tough for us to start,” Chapman said. “We have some girls that are stepping into full time varsity spots for the first time and we are still trying to figure out what our identity is. On top of that, we started off with Frontenac who is a powerhouse and they are masters of the small ball game. Fort Scott is experienced and pretty solid. Ottawa has always been consistent, no matter who they have in their lineup.

“We are working to get better, game-to-game, and learning who we are. The best thing about this group is that they are in it for each other and they just want to help the team get better. We took a big step forward Thursday night and realized that we can be really good when we play clean defense and put the ball in play.”



Louisburg freshman Annabelle Hathaway makes contact with a pitch Thursday against Ottawa.

In the opener Thursday against Ottawa, the Wildcats did a lot

of that, especially in the bottom of the fifth inning. Down 7-1 and with two outs, Louisburg used a 5-run fifth to cut the Cyclone lead to just one.

Junior Peytyn Van Tyle opened the inning with a single and later scored on a wild pitch. Sophomore McKinley Harmon tripled home Emily Brotherton and later scored on an Addy Stohs single.

Brynley Bauer singled home Stohs, and Annabelle Hathaway scored on another passed ball to make it 7-6.

The Wildcats tried for another rally in the bottom of the seventh when Stohs opened with single, but was left stranded at first.

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“Instead of putting our heads down, the girls

just chipped away,” Chapman said. “We made adjustments, played better defense an

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“We did most of that damage with 2 outs which was really cool. That’s the best thing about this beautiful game. There’s no clock. You have 3 outs to do as much damage as you can and with 1 out to spare we did just that. We kept that momentum and played great defense to give ourselves a chance in the bottom of the seventh. We just ran out of the magic. I’m so dang proud of them. It was great to see their confidence and belief in themselves finally show up. As a coach, I know we can be good but each girl needs to believe in themselves and trust what they have learned since they have been playing T-Ball because we have some really quality players.”



Louisburg second baseman Raeya Keagle tries to turn a double play Thursday against Ottawa.

Brotherton led the Wildcat offense in the first game with three hits, including a double, while Stohs and Hathaway each had a pair of hits.

Van Tyle pitched for the Wildcats and allowed just three earned runs in seven innings and struck out two.

In the second game, the Wildcats jumped out to a 2-1 lead after one inning after Stohs doubled and scored on a triple by Hathaway. Bauer drove home Hathaway on an RBI single.

Ottawa took the lead back with three runs in the second, but used an 8-run fifth inning to secure the sweep over Louisburg. Hathaway and Bauer each had two hits to pace the Wildcat offense.

Louisburg is back in action tonight as the Wildcats travel to Baldwin for a Frontier League matchup. Varsity will begin at

approximately 6 p.m.

Mix of experience, youth ready to lead Wildcat softball



Louisburg senior Addy Stohs is one of four returning starters to the Wildcat softball team this season.

This year's version of the Louisburg softball team will look much different than the year before, and for good reason.

The Wildcats had to say goodbye to five senior starters, including both of their starting pitchers, who played on the varsity level since they were freshmen.

It will be a difficult core to replace, but Louisburg coach Nick Chapman is optimistic about the group he has coming back, including four returning starters and 5-member senior class.

“I’m excited for this season,” Chapman said. “We lost some seniors with a lot of experience last year, but our seniors this year have taken on the leadership role and done a great job with it. They have been positive leaders and role models for our younger girls. Our team culture is fantastic right now. Every girl is bought in and they encourage each other to help our team grow.”

The Wildcats will be led by their four returning starters in seniors Addy Stohs, Katie McKain, Brynley Bauer and junior Shyloh Waite. All four saw a lot of varsity competition last season and Stohs is the team’s returning middle of the order bat.

McKain will start in centerfield for the Wildcats, while Bauer will resume her duties as the team’s starting catcher. Waite will move from her outfield spot a year ago and is the starting shortstop.



Louisburg senior Brynley Bauer gets a hit during a game last season. Bauer returns as the team's starting catcher.

"I have high expectations for this group," Chapman said. "We are still chasing a season of being .500 or better and I want us to win a regional game and find our way into the state tournament. The best part about this group is that they are in it for each other. They don't come with drama. They want to get better at practice everyday and they help each other get better everyday."

Brotherton, who is in her first year of varsity action, will start at third base, while Stohs will return as the team's starting first baseman. Junior Raeya Keagle and Brotherton will share time at second base, while freshman Annabelle Hathaway could also see time at third.

Junior Paytyn Van Tyle, sophomore McKinley Harmon and freshman Lydia Copeland will share time in the corner outfield spots. Copeland will also catch alongside Bauer.

“We’ll be fairly young, but we will still have some good experience,” Chapman said.



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“Offensively, I think we have a great mix of girls who can hit the ball hard anywhere and girls who can play small ball

really well. It’s not going to be one girl who we are going to rely on. We are going to rely on 1-9 to make our offense move. Every girl in the lineup is important.”

Louisburg will also feature some new faces on the mound. Keagle and Van Tyle will start for the Wildcats, while Harmon and Hathaway will also see some varsity innings.

“They each offer something a little different and they work hard to hone their craft,” Chapman said. “We are going to put a solid defense behind them and work together as a unit to have as clean of a defense as possible.”

The Wildcats will open their season Thursday when they travel to Frontenac for a doubleheader. First pitch is set for 4 p.m.