Experienced Lady Cats excited to get season started



Louisburg senior Molly Rison, a first team all-league and all-state player a season ago, looks to lead the Lady Cats along with seniors Karson Griggs and Madison Svoboda.

The 2018 season was a rocky one for the Louisburg girls softball team as it featured a lot of young players on the varsity level.

It turned into a three-win season for the Lady Cats, but with all the growing pains they experienced a year ago, Louisburg hopes 2019 will bring a newfound optimism to the team.

Louisburg returns almost their entire varsity roster from a season ago, including its three All-Frontier League selections. It is a good start for a Lady Cat team that struggled to find many positives last year.

“We are hoping to improve upon last year’s three win season,” Louisburg coach John Ozier said. “We let six games get away from us last year in the last few innings, so we have got to learn to finish games. The coaching staff has witnessed good chemistry thus far with our girls,

and we anticipate
it continuing throughout the upcoming season.”

The Lady Cats return a good group of bats to lead the way offensively and it starts with senior Molly Rison. The Louisburg first baseman earned first team All-Frontier League honors last season and was an all-state selection.

Rison
had a big season for Louisburg as she led the Lady Cats in four statistical
categories as she finished the season with a .508 average and had a .720
slugging percentage. She also had 33 hits on the year to go along with 10
doubles, one home run and 30 RBIs.

Seniors Karson Griggs and Maddie
Svoboda will also give Louisburg some depth at the top of the lineup as the two
will play third and second base, respectively. Both players could also see time
in the outfield as well.

Griggs, who earned honorable
mention all-league honors last season, ended the year with a .420 average, which included 23 hits, eight RBIs,
six doubles and a home run as she hit near the top of the lineup most of the
season. She also led the team with 29 runs scored.

Svoboda also had a good season at the plate for Louisburg as she connected on four home runs and had 13 RBIs to go along with 22 runs scored
and a .300 batting average.

“All three seniors have stepped up and
accepted the leadership role with the underclassmen,” Ozier said. “I look for

great things out of all three this year.”



Sophomore Alyse Moore is one of several returning starters for the Lady Cats.

Junior Kayla Willey, who was selected
honorable mention all-league last season at second, will split her time between
there and the outfield. Willey, who didn’t commit an error last year, also had
.417 average on the year with eight RBIs.

Sophomore Alyse Moore will return to her starting shortstop role, while juniors Reilly Ratliff-Becher and Lauren Cutshaw will split time at the catcher spot. Junior Paige Eccher will also see some time in the outfield.

The Lady Cats will have to rely on a
young pitching staff and sophomore Brooklyn Diederich will see a lot of time on
the mound this season after starting several games as a freshman.

Junior August Daniels and freshman Mia
Wilson are the other two Louisburg pitchers who are vying for playing time as
well.



Sophomore Brooklyn Diederich will lead the Louisburg pitching staff.

The games haven’t even started yet for the Lady Cats and they have already encountered some obstacles – namely Mother Nature. Louisburg has had very few practices outdoors due to the cold and snowy weather, and are a little behind on getting ready for the season.

“This is my fourth year with the program and I have never experienced a start to the season where we have not been able to have a
complete practice outside,” Ozier said. “The girls have worked hard under the

very difficult practice situations. It is very difficult to simulate game
situations, especially outfield reps, when you are crammed into a gym.”

Louisburg will get its season started Tuesday when it travels to
Piper for a doubleheader. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m. at Piper High
School.

It will be the first off three straight doubleheaders on the road for Louisburg. The Lady Cats have their home opener on April 4 against
Wellsville.

Top 10 Stories of 2018

It was a successful, and eventful, 2018 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 2018, 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 2019 to begin. Looking forward to it!



10. Dillon medals at state golf for second straight year

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 11thoverall 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.”

It was another notch on Dillon’s list of accomplishments that included a Frontier League title and six straight tournament victories during the 2018 season.



Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein



Louisburg girls soccer coach Kyle Conley

9. Conley, Ebenstein named Class 4A Coach of the Year

Louisburg
girls soccer coach Kyle Conley and Wildcat football coach Robert Ebenstein both
led their respective teams to special seasons.

Those seasons were special enough for both coaches to earn two big awards.

Conley was rewarded for all his hard work in June when it was announced that he was named as the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association’s Girls Coach of the Year for Class 4-1A.

He guided the Wildcats to a 14-7 record and a spot in the state championship match, where the Lady Cats finished second overall. The

finish was something to remember for Wildcat fans as that was accomplished in
just the program’s third year of existence.

He has posted a
41-18-2 record during his time as the Wildcat girls head coach and also guided
the Louisburg boys soccer team to its best finish in program history in 2017
with a fourth place finish at state.

As for Ebenstein, he
guided the Wildcats to 10 straight victories and a regional championship to
start the 2018 season, before getting knocked out in the sectional round
against eventual state champion, Bishop Miege.

Following the season, the Kansas Football Coaches Association named Ebenstein as the Class 4A Coach of the Year. Ebenstein, who is just in his second season as head coach, has a 16-4 record with the Wildcats as he guided his team to a Frontier League championship this year.



8.
Holtzen finishes Louisburg career with 12 varsity letters

Once Isabelle Holtzen
received her diploma and walked out of Louisburg High School for the last time
as a student, she officially became one of the most decorated female athletes
in school history.

No, she doesn’t have any individual state championships, or even
one as part of a team. Holtzen’s decorations aren’t ones in the form of
trophies or all-state honors, but instead, they can be found on the front of

her letter jacket.

Holtzen became the first female athlete in at least 20 years to earn 12 varsity letters, which means she lettered on the varsity level in three sports in each of her four years of high school.

In research done by Louisburg Sports Zone, it was unable to find
the last athlete to accomplish the feat, which could mean Holtzen could be the
first Lady Cat to do so. She competed in cross country, basketball and track
and field

The last athlete to come close was in 2001 when Krystal Bowes earned 10 varsity letters before moving on to a collegiate track career at
Wichita State.

“The biggest thing that it means to me is to just have an opportunity to participate in three sports at a school like Louisburg,” Holtzen
said. “The bigger the school that you go to, the harder it is to play multiple
sports at the varsity level and I think Louisburg is unique in that fact. The
best part of this whole journey was I think my freshman year because there was
no pressure and no one was expecting anything from me. It was surprising and
exciting to be able to letter in all three sports.”

Holtzen is currently at
Northern Iowa, where she received a scholarship to pole vault for the Panther
Track and Field Team.



7.
Dixon earns All-American, Player of the Year honors, signs with Kansas State

Louisburg
senior Anna Dixon led the Lady Cat volleyball program all season and she was recognized
for her play on the court.

Dixon was named to the Under Armour Volleyball All-American team as she received a spot on the honorable mention squad when the list was released in November.

Dixon, the 6-foot-3 outside hitter, was recently named the Class 4A Player of the Year by the Kansas Volleyball Association, and along with that was also selected to the all-state first team.

It was the second year in a row Dixon was named player of the year, as she had to share the honor last season with Rose Hill’s Gracie Van

Driel.

The honors certainly didn’t stop there as Dixon was all named to the All-Frontier League first team as she helped guide the Lady Cats to an undefeated league season.

Dixon led the Lady Cats in kills with 584 in 105 sets played. She also finished with 325 digs, as she played all six rotations and also had 50 aces and 42 blocks.

In her four years with the program, Dixon finished with 2,003 kills, which would place that total among the best the school has ever seen.

All that success resulted in a dream come true for Dixon as she made it official last November when she signed to play volleyball at Kansas State.

“I have always known Kansas State was going to be my home,” Dixon said. “Even since I committed as a sophomore, I always wanted to go up to Manhattan and see the girls and spend time with the team. K-State is where I need to be.”



6. Louisburg wrestling sends six to state, Holtzen earns first state medal

SALINA – As the final whistle sounded in his blood round match, Cade Holtzen looked up into the rafters of the Tony's Pizza Events Center and smiled.

He had finally reached his goal.

Holtzen defeated Columbus' Gabe Porter by a 6-0 decision Saturday during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships in Salina and secured his state medal.

"It is one of the best feelings that I have had in my life," Holtzen said. "Just knowing that I'm going to place – you just can't match that with anything else."

It certainly wasn't

easy for the Louisburg freshman as he faced a win or go home with nothing scenario heading into his match with Porter. Holtzen pulled out the victory and eventually finished sixth overall at 113 pounds to give Louisburg a state medalist for the third consecutive season.

“It is pretty cool,” he said. “I have been working for this all season, so to get a state medal is great. It may not have been as high as I wanted, but any state medal is pretty amazing.”

Holtzen had a special year for the Wildcats as he finished with a 45-6 record and broke the school record for most wins in a single season. He won four different tournaments and was a Frontier League and regional tournament runner-up.

To add to his resume, he became only the second freshman in school history to earn state medal – second to only Austin Hood, who would go on to with three state titles.

Austin Moore finished one victory shy of earning his first state medal, while Ryan Adams, Thad Hendrix and Blue Caplinger also picked up wins at the state tournament.



5. Moore, Johnson finished in top 10 at state cross country, girls qualify for second straight year

WAMEGO – It was going to be hard for the Louisburg High School girls cross country team to duplicate its magical season of 2017.

Not only did the Lady Cats qualify their team for state for the first time in program history, but they also had a top five finisher in Trinity Moore.

Fast forward to 2018, Louisburg wasn't able to match that successful run – the Lady Cats took it a step further.

Moore, along with freshman Reese Johnson, each had a top 10 finish during the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships at Wamego Country Club, and it is the first time

in school history that two female runners had medaled at a state meet. Louisburg added on to that as the girls finished fifth in the team standings with 154 points, which is also the highest finish in school history.

Moore, who finished
fifth at state a year ago, bested her performance by one place as she took
fourth with one of her better performances of the season. Johnson was right
behind her as she crossed the finish line in sixth.

Shaylor Whitham, Carlee Gassman, Kaitlyn Lewer, Delaney Wright and Kennady Wilkerson were also members of the Lady Cats' team to run at state. Emily Williams was a member of the regional team that finished second overall.



4. Louisburg track earns six state medals, Gassman state runner-up in

300 hurdles

WICHITA – Carlee Gassman had broken the Louisburg High School 300-meter hurdle record three different times in 2018 prior to the state track meet.

She picked the perfect time to make it a fourth.

Gassman broke her own school record in the 300 hurdles in May at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships in Wichita as she ran a time of 45.68 seconds to earn a silver medal as she was the Wildcats' top performer on the weekend. Andale's Abby Smarsh, who is a senior, won the event in 44.73.

It was the Louisburg sophomore's first time competing at the Kansas meet as she transferred in from Iowa last year, where she qualified for
the state meet there in the 400 hurdles.

Gassman's medal in the 300 hurdles was just one of six the Wildcats were able to bring home following the two-day meet. Those six medals
were the most Louisburg has earned since 2011, when the Wildcats combined to
medal in 10 events and the boys won their first team state title.

The 300 hurdles wasn't the only event Gassman found success in as she also medaled in the long jump. Gassman, who hadn't competed in the event
prior to this year, finished fifth with a mark of 17 feet, 0.25 inches.

Isabelle Holtzen
would go on to finish sixth in the pole vault, the boys 4×400 team of Chris
Williams, Blue Caplinger, Ben Wiedenmann and Justin Collins went on to take
seventh. Williams finished eighth in the 400-meter run and

Trent Martin medaled
eighth in the boys pole vault.



3. Louisburg volleyball takes runner-up at state for second straight season

HUTCHINSON – The
feeling was much of the same.

The pride of finishing as a state-runner up was a popular one among the members of the Louisburg volleyball team. At the same time, the
frustration of taking second in state in back-to-back seasons was just as
prevalent.

Louisburg wasn’t quite sure what to feel following its 25-13 and 25-14 loss to Bishop Miege in the championship game of the Class 4A state tournament Saturday at Hutchinson Sports Arena.

In 2017, the Lady
Cats fell to Rose Hill by two points in the championship

match, and fast forward to the present, they were in the same spot – holding the state runner-up trophy. It was the 15th time in program history that Louisburg finished in the top four at state.

The Lady Cats rattled off four straight wins to start the tournament, including knocking off No. 1 seed Independence, and defending state champions Rose Hill and Topeka Hayden. Louisburg then battled back to defeat Andale in the state semifinals.

“The loss was tough,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “To come so close to a state title two years in a row, only to come up short is tough. But with that being said, it is a huge accomplishment for this team to get back to the state championship and make it two years in a row. Finishing second is nothing to hang our heads on. Last year’s finish fueled the fire for the team this year, and I challenged the returning players to use this loss and feeling to fuel them for next year.”

Louisburg has been one of the more dominant teams in Class 4A in the last decade as the Lady Cats have made the state tournament seven out of the last nine years and have finished as a state runner-up on three different occasions, along with several third and fourth place finishes. They finished 2018 with a 36-9 record.



2. Louisburg girls soccer advances to title game, has best finish in program history

NORTH NEWTON – The obstacle seemed insurmountable – and it was.

The Louisburg High School girls soccer team found itself in the Class 4-1A state championship match in the program's third year of existence, but if they wanted to take it another step further, the Wildcats were going to have to knock the defending state champion of its perch.

Unfortunately, Bishop Miege wasn't about to be moved.

In a state title game that was played in the sweltering heat in late May at Bethel College, the Wildcats couldn't stay with the Stags in a 5-0 defeat. It was the third consecutive title for Bishop Miege, while Louisburg earned a state plaque for the first time in its short history.

It was special season for the Wildcats as the night before they knocked off Topeka Hayden, 1-0, in the state semifinals to secure the program's first state plaque. In 2017, Louisburg

both games in its state tournament appearance and finished fourth.

The road to this state championship appearance has been an interesting one for the Wildcats. More than three years ago, a group of Louisburg parents and citizens raised enough money to begin the girls soccer program and fund it for three years.

Louisburg was in the final year of that funding, and while the program isn't going away, the team realized they needed to play for more than themselves.

"We played for the community tonight," Louisburg senior Bailey Belcher said after the Hayden win. "We have to remember that when they raised money for this program, it was just through this year, so I think we owed it to them to play well. I really think it might have helped with how we played and I think it was one of the best games we played all season."

"It is a third-year program with 41 wins, three regional championships, two state final fours and now a state runner-up," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said after the title game. "We just have kids who come in and work their butt off. They are not soft, they aren't weak and from top to bottom they are going to work hard.

"We worked hard, but we just played Miege. That is one of the best teams in the state, and that stinks, but our kids played hard, worked

their tail off and it was a great year. We had people criticize us for how we
got there, but we won games and that really motivated the kids. It got them
fired up to go do something bigger than themselves. I couldn’t be more proud of
they stuck together and what they accomplished.”



1. Football wins 10 straight, takes Frontier League title and regional championship

It had been almost two
months since Louisburg and Piper squared off on the football field in what was
one of the more entertaining games on the Wildcats’ schedule.

Back in early
September, Louisburg left Piper High School with a seven-point win – a victory
that would help propel them to a Frontier League championship and a perfect
regular season.

The two teams squared off again and the stakes were a bit higher. The game, at least for Louisburg anyway, was even more exciting.

The Wildcats dominated action from the opening kickoff and never looked back in a 48-0 win over the Pirates. In the process, Louisburg won the school's first regional championship since 2016 and are off to a 10-0 start for the first time since 2010.

Louisburg advanced to the sectional round where it fell to eventual state champion Bishop Miege, 55-21, and finished its season with a 10-1 record.

It was as season marked with special moments, including a 28-7 victory over then-undefeated Paola late in the year to secure a league title.

"Being 10-0 and then having that first loss of the season was very disappointing," Louisburg coach Robert Ebenstein said. "Losing always sucks, but losing in the playoffs and having to wait until next August is the worst. At the end of the day, Miege is a very good team and we did some good things. We got them to fourth down on multiple drives in the first quarter, we just couldn't make the plays on those big downs. Then we got behind a little and started pressing.

"Overall it was a great year. I am very proud of our guys and excited for them that they were able to get double digit wins for only the third time since 2000, and

there was a
lot of really good football played during that time period. It was a lot
fun to be a part of.”



Austin Moore was named to the Kansas Shrine Bowl and was a first-team all-state player for the Wildcats. Moore was also named as the Kansas Small-Class Player of the Year by 810 Varsity.

With all that success, honors
started to roll in for its players as running backs Austin Moore and Blue
Caplinger, along with linemen Brayden White and Kiefer Tucker all earned
all-state honors.

Moore and White went on to be
semifinalists for the Simone Awards and Moore was also selected to participate
in the Kansas Shrine Bowl in the summer of 2019. Ebenstein was also named as
coach of the year by the football coaches association.

Most recently, Moore was
named the Kansas Small-Class Player of the Year and Running Back of the Year by
810varsity.com, while White was named the Small-Class Lineman of the Year.
Ebenstein was also named Kansas Small-Class Coach of the Year by 810 Varsity.

Griggs signs on with Highland softball



Louisburg senior Karson Griggs recently signed her letter of intent to play softball at Highland Community College. Griggs is seated next to her parents Bert and Tiffani Griggs. Standing is her club coach Lee Storrer, Highland assistant Scott Jordan, Louisburg head coach John Ozier and Highland head coach Heidi Jordan.

Karson Griggs has played softball nearly her entire life and has made a lot of sacrifices along the way.

The Louisburg High School senior had dreams to hopefully play on the collegiate level, but she knew it was going to take a lot of hard work and dedication.

“Softball has probably been one of the biggest parts of my life,” Griggs said. “I don’t go out and hang out with friends that much during the summer. I go out and play softball with my teammates. I have worked so hard every night year-round and this makes it all worth it.”

“This” was an opportunity she couldn’t pass up.

On Nov. 14, Griggs signed her letter of intent to play softball at Highland Community College next season. She made it official in a room full of family and friends as she put pen to paper in a signing ceremony at LHS.

“I am very, very excited to join the Highland softball program,” Griggs said. “They have a lot of great girls on their team and I know I can get a good education there. I am just really excited to get going.”

Griggs joins a Scottie program that finished with a 34-9 record last season and advanced to the Region VI championship game, where they fell to Johnson County in a one run game.

Highland has recorded a lot of success under head coach Heidi Jordan and Griggs is looking forward to helping the Scotties continue their winning ways.

Griggs, who has played several positions for Louisburg this past three seasons, will transition to the outfield for Highland and she is ready for the opportunity to help in any way she can.



Karson Griggs, a 2-time all-league player, will be joining the Highland softball program next year.

“They see me as an outfielder, so I get work a lot more with Coach Heidi on that and I think that will be really good for me and I am looking forward to that,” Griggs said. “Coach Heidi and Coach Scott (Jordan) are both great coaches, and I think I will not only improve as a softball player, but academically as well.”

Griggs has been one of Louisburg’s top offensive players the last three seasons and has earned all-league honors the last two years. She ended last season with a .420 average, which included 23 hits, eight RBIs, six doubles and a home run as she hit near the top of the lineup most of the season. She also led the team with 29 runs scored.

When time came to look at different colleges in the offseason, one stood out among the rest and Griggs believes Highland is

going to be a good fit.

“I think the fact that they responded to me sooner than a lot of other programs did, really meant a lot to me,” she said. “The coaches are great and they are very parent-like and that is another reason why I like it. The school is good and has the programs that I want. Plus, it is not too close from home, but not too far away either.

“I would love to get in as a freshman and get some playing time. That way I can learn and get better, but I will do whatever the team asks of me. I would love to move on to a four-year school after this, but anywhere I can get a good education and play softball would be amazing.”

Hinkle ready to take on role as LHS activities director



Walking into Scott Hinkle’s office, it doesn’t appear he started a new job two weeks ago.

The moving boxes are mostly gone. His desk is organized with everything in its place, along with a calendar crammed full of upcoming events.

Hinkle is not shy to tell people about his love for the Boston Red Sox. Sitting on one wall are two older chairs from Fenway

Park, along other memorabilia.

The one thing that Hinkle hasn't caught up on is his efforts to get some purple gear. An avid Kansas Jayhawk fan, he hasn't had need to purchase any purple flair in the past. Seems like that will change shortly as he was hired as the new activities director and assistant principal at Louisburg High School earlier this summer.

"I have been a Jayhawk fan all my life," Hinkle said. "It will be a little weird to wear purple that is for sure, but I am sure I will get used to it. Before I left my old job, people found out where I was going so they started giving me little gifts with purple on it, like markers and stuff like that. They definitely got a kick out of that."

Hinkle takes over for Jeremy Holloway, who was promoted to principal at LHS and becomes the third activities director in as many years to take over that spot.

"My wife has family in Kansas City and I have family in Wichita and so we were looking to come this way," Hinkle said. "I had a couple friends that told me that the Louisburg position had opened up. I had heard of Louisburg a long time ago. I actually coached at Ottawa University in the early 90s and was familiar with the area. I came up, interviewed and here I am. It has obviously worked out well.

"Everyone has been so helpful and friendly and it is a good time to be coming to Louisburg. I am excited to be here."

Before taking the job in Louisburg, Hinkle had spent the last 22 years in the Liberal school district in a variety of roles. He served as the boys high school basketball coach, along with nine years as an activities director, a year as the head girls basketball coach at the local community college and last year he served as assistant principal at the high school.

Hinkle graduated from Valley Center High School, and went on

from there to earn his bachelor's degree from Friends University, where he played basketball, and his master's from the University of Kansas.

Basketball has always been a passion for Hinkle, but during his time as activities director at Liberal, he had a chance to learn the life of other sports as well.

"Liberal changed a lot from when I first got there in the mid 90s when they were a football and track powerhouse," Hinkle said. "There were just athletes galore, but the culture kind of changed. We were really good in soccer and decent in track and volleyball. We still had good kids and good athletes, but it was a big transition as far as sports go when I first got there. My kids grew up there and being involved and being able to watch their events was something that has always appealed to me.

"Basketball has always been in my blood. Other than my nine years as athletic director, I have coached in some capacity and I am a big basketball fan. Obviously, being an athletic director I am just a big sports fan in general."

Still new in town, Hinkle is still trying to get to know his coaching staff, but he is excited about the situation he is walking into with the Wildcats finishing as state runner-ups in volleyball and girls soccer last season. Several cross country, golf, wrestling and track athletes also earned state medals.

However, if there is one thing he wanted to relay to everyone is that he wants to give his coaches the freedom to run their programs.

"I want to let the coaches, coach," he said. "I am not going to be the guy that says this is how we did things in Liberal and I am not that type of leader. If it comes to the point where they need some advice, I want to be a resource for them. I don't want to be someone that is looking for something.

“I have met a few of the coaches. I have let them know that I am here if they need anything. I have stopped by the weight room to speak to a few coaches and some have stopped by to introduce themselves. I am still learning names and faces. We have a coaches meeting on the 10th and I will see and learn a lot more about them then.”

With all the success the Wildcats had last season in the sports arena, Hinkle is happy to be a part of the LHS family and is learning new things about the town every day.

“I have heard all types of things,” he said. “I have heard they take football pretty seriously here. I know they were state runner-up in volleyball and girls soccer last year and that is an exciting thing to walk into. I think expectations are obviously high in those sports, but I think everyone always has high expectations. I am not going to do anything different than normal and I am just going to sit back and observe for a while and take it all in.”

Hinkle will experience some different things along with his new position. This season, the Frontier League will welcome three new teams – Bonner Springs, Piper and Tonganoxie – and will say goodbye to De Soto.

Another big change will be the postseason formats with several sports as the Kansas State High School Activities Association reshuffled their classification system, eliminating Class 4A-Division II.

“With the changes in the league, the classification system and being a new AD, it is probably a good time to be coming on,” Hinkle said. “The learning curve is going to be the same for all of us.

“I walked into a good situation for scheduling because (Holloway) already had everything all taken care of,” he said. “I think the dynamics of the league are going to change.

Liberal's former girls basketball coach is the coach at Piper and I know a little bit about them. As far as the programs and rivalries, that is something that is going to come with time."

Even with all the changes in his life – moving, starting a new job, getting to know new faces – Hinkle is ready for what lies ahead and the staff at Louisburg has helped with that transition.

"It has been a whirlwind and it has been information overload," he said. "It is a lot of the same things I did in Liberal as athletic director, I just haven't done it for the last five years. Being an assistant principal at Liberal last year, I think, helped me prepare for the principal side.

"People have just gone out of their way to be helpful. From the administration to the custodial staff to the secretaries, everyone has been super helpful. When I was out around town, people have welcomed me and it has been a friendly feel everywhere I have been."

Rison named to Class 4A-Division 1 all-state softball team



Molly Rison had a successful season for the Louisburg softball

team as she earned all-league honors earlier this month, but most recently, Rison was named to the Class 4A-Division I all-state team.

Louisburg's Molly Rison had a junior season to remember for the Lady Cat softball team as she was one of the team's best offensive players, and because of that, she earned first team all-league honors.

Those honors continue to roll in for Rison, but this time, it is on a bigger level.

Rison was recently named to the Class 4A-Division I All-State second team that was decided on by the Kansas high school softball coaches. She was named to the second team infield thanks to her work at first base and at catcher.

"Molly earned a well-deserved honor," Louisburg coach John Ozier said. "She was the quiet leader of the team in clutch situations. With the struggles this team experienced this season, she remained consistent, driven, and focused on helping the team."

Rison had a big season for Louisburg as she led the Lady Cats in four statistical categories as she finished the season with a .508 average and had a .720 slugging percentage. She also had 33 hits on the year to go along with 10 doubles, one home run and 30 RBIs.

Rison was one of four Frontier League players to earn all-state honors. Spring Hill's Regan Smith (utility) and Elizabeth Hays (outfield), along with Eudora's Kyla Etter (pitcher), were selected to the first team.

Rison earns first team all-league honors; Lady Cats selected for 3 spots



Louisburg junior Molly Rison had a big season for the Lady Cats as she led the team if four statistical categories and was recently named to the All-Frontier League first team.

The Louisburg High School softball team may have not had the season it wanted after finishing with a 3-18 record, but a few individuals caught the eye of the Frontier League coaches.

In fact, three Lady Cats earned All-Frontier League honors when the teams were released last week and one player was considered among the best the league had to offer.

Junior Molly Rison was a first team selection in the infield as she was a fixture in the middle of the Lousiburg lineup. The Lady Cats also had a pair of honorable mention selections in sophomore Kayla Willey (infield) and junior Karson Griggs (utility).

Rison had a big season for Louisburg as she led the Lady Cats in four statistical categories as she finished the season with a .508 average and had a .720 slugging percentage. She also had 33 hits on the year to go along with 10 doubles, one home run and 30 RBIs.

“Molly earned a well-deserved honor,” Louisburg coach John Ozier said. “She was the quiet leader of the team in clutch situations. With the struggles this team experienced this season, she remained consistent, driven, and focused on helping the team.

“A catcher by trade, she unselfishly gave up that position to help out with some other areas of need. She was our team leader in average, RBI’s, slugging percentage and OPS. She earned top honors as being one of only four infielders chosen in the toughest league in 4A.”



Karson Griggs earned an honorable mention all-league selection at the utility spot.

Griggs also had a good season for the Lady Cats at the plate and played all over the diamond. She ended the year with a .420 average, which included 23 hits, eight RBIs, six doubles

and a home run as she hit near the top of the lineup most of the season. She also led the team with 29 runs scored.

Defensively, Griggs committed just five errors in 20 games as she saw a lot of time at third base and in the outfield.

“In my opinion, Karson deserved the same honor as Molly,” Ozier said. “She was forced to shift around to many positions to help a team decimated with injures, health issues and attrition. Like Molly, and couple of our other upper classmen (Maddie Svoboda, Bailey Kern, Bailey Sarna, and Kelsey Higginbotham), Karson was unselfish in her willingness to be moved around in the defensive lineup.”



Louisburg second baseman Kayla Willey was also selected as an all-Frontier League honorable mention.

Willey earned another league spot for Louisburg after strong season at second base. In 13 games, she had a .417 average,

had 10 hits and eight RBIs. She was also strong defensively as she didn’t commit an error the entire season.

“Kayla was a nice surprise to be given honorable mention recognition at second base,” Ozier said. “She was forced to miss part of the season following surgery. Kayla was able to play second base only about half the season.”

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE SOFTBALL

FIRST TEAM

INFIELD: Kamryn Shaffer, senior, Ottawa; **Molly Rison, junior, Louisburg**; Betsy Parmley, senior, Baldwin; Sierra Smith, sophomore, Eudora

OUTFIELD: Sienna Hall, senior, Baldwin; Audrey Flowers, junior, Baldwin; Elizabeth Hays, senior, Spring Hill

CATCHER: Gaige Pinkerton, freshman, Spring Hill

PITCHER: Jordan Johnson, senior, Paola; Kyla Etter, junior, Eudora

UTILITY: Regan Smith, senior, Spring Hill

SECOND TEAM

INFIELD: Jenna DeVore, senior, Ottawa; Hannah Menefee, junior, Paola; Paige Cooper, sophomore, Spring Hill; Kennedy Doherty, senior, Eudora

OUTFIELD: Justine Kennington, junior, Ottawa; Aubrey Weatherbie, sophomore, Paola; Devin Pucell, senior, Eudora

CATCHER: Emma Grossoehme, freshman, Baldwin

PITCHER: Layney Steging, junior, Spring Hill

UTILITY: Hannah Pearce, senior, Paola

HONORABLE MENTION

INFIELD: Halle Schindler, junior, Paola; **Kayla Willey, sophomore, Louisburg**; Avery Karlin, freshman, De Soto; Kellee Wiggins, senior, Baldwin; Megan Kennedy, junior, Eudora

OUTFIELD: Alli Kerns, junior, Ottawa; Jordan Diehl, sophomore, De Soto; McKInley Markley, senior, Baldwin

CATCHER: Jocelyn Woods, senior, Ottawa; Josie Bedford, senior, De Soto; Alaina Howe, senior, Eudora

UTILITY: **Karson Griggs, junior, Louisburg**

All-Frontier League Baseball, Girls Soccer and Softball teams

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE BASEBALL

FIRST TEAM

INFIELD: Darren Winans, senior, De Soto; Kurt Golubski, senior, Paola; Chad Bones, junior, Ottawa; Kaleb Shaffer, senior, Ottawa

OUTFIELD: Khalil Thrasher, senior, Eudora; Jackson Burrell, senior, Spring Hill; Nick Modes, senior, Paola

CATCHER: Chandler Bloomer, senior, Ottawa

PITCHER: Conner Mackay, senior, De Soto; Jared Parenti, senior, Ottawa

UTILITY: Anthony Slaughter, senior, De Soto

SECOND TEAM

INFIELD: Bryce Mohl, senior, De Soto; Cody Lucas, senior, Spring Hill; Nash Dreiling, senior, Paola; Chris Wilks, senior, Baldwin

OUTFIELD: Jack Barger, senior, De Soto; Peyton Garvin, senior, Eudora; **Madden Rutherford, sophomore, Louisburg**

CATCHER: Evan Peuser, sophomore, Paola

PITCHER: Tyler Barkemeyer, junior, De Soto; Jake Schrock, senior, Baldwin

UTILITY: Michael Daggett, sophomore, Paola

HONORABLE MENTION

INFIELD: Conner Mackay, senior, De Soto; Bryce Towles, senior, Spring Hill; Luke Angermayer, senior, Paola; Owen LaMar,

senior, Ottawa; Jake Schrock, senior, Baldwin; **Garrett Caldwell, senior, Louisburg**

OUTFIELD: Connor Strouse, senior, De Soto; Zade Barker, sophomore, Spring Hill; Wyatt Johnston, senior, Paola; Garrett Owings, senior, Baldwin

CATCHER: Corbyn Meyers, sophomore, Spring Hill; Garrett Borth, senior, Baldwin

PITCHER: Jayden Pierce, junior, Eudora; Garret Trimmer, junior, Paola; Chance Crowley, senior, Ottawa

UTILITY: Cameron Reynolds, junior, Ottawa; Ty Bennett, junior, Baldwin; **Garrett Harding, sophomore, Louisburg**

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE GIRLS SOCCER

FIRST TEAM

Caitlin Countryman, junior, Baldwin

Josie Boyle, sophomore, Baldwin

Mackenzie Mohl, sophomore, De Soto

Jordan Zade, freshman, De Soto

Morgan Laplante, junior, De Soto

Bailey Belcher, senior, Louisburg

Mackenzie Scholtz, sophomore, Louisburg

Sara Watson, senior, Spring Hill

Mallory Smith, junior, Spring Hill

Anna Watson, senior, Spring Hill

GOALIE: Taylor Rogers, senior, De Soto

SECOND TEAM

Anna Burnett, sophomore, Baldwin

Caitlin Walton, senior, De Soto

Alexa Rosetta, senior, De Soto

Alex Schemmel, senior, De Soto

Kate Erpelding, freshman, Eudora

Alex Pascua, freshman, Eudora

Erin Lemke, sophomore, Louisburg

Amanda Wray, senior, Ottawa

Jasmine Diaz, senior, De Soto

Kaylen Dawson, sophomore, Spring Hill

GOALIE: Emery Mounce, sophomore, Spring Hill

HONORABLE MENTION

Lauren Russell, freshman, Baldwin

Samantha McKinney, senior, Baldwin

Ashley Panagakis, junior, De Soto

Krista Rush, junior, De Soto

Nicole Whitten, senior, Eudora

Kaitlyn Lewer, junior, Louisburg

Trinity Moore, sophomore, Louisburg

Savannah Reinhart, senior, Louisburg

Lexi Dillon, freshman, Spring Hill

GOALIE: **Shay Whiting, senior, Louisburg**; Britney Smith, senior, Ottawa

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE SOFTBALL

FIRST TEAM

INFIELD: Kamryn Shaffer, senior, Ottawa; **Molly Rison, junior, Louisburg**; Betsy Parmley, senior, Baldwin; Sierra Smith, sophomore, Eudora

OUTFIELD: Sienna Hall, senior, Baldwin; Audrey Flowers, junior, Baldwin; Elizabeth Hays, senior, Spring Hill

CATCHER: Gaige Pinkerton, freshman, Spring Hill

PITCHER: Jordan Johnson, senior, Paola; Kyla Etter, junior, Eudora

UTILITY: Regan Smith, senior, Spring Hill

SECOND TEAM

INFIELD: Jenna DeVore, senior, Ottawa; Hannah Menefee, junior, Paola; Paige Cooper, sophomore, Spring Hill; Kennedy Doherty, senior, Eudora

OUTFIELD: Justine Kennington, junior, Ottawa; Aubrey Weatherbie, sophomore, Paola; Devin Pucell, senior, Eudora

CATCHER: Emma Grossoehme, freshman, Baldwin

PITCHER: Layney Steging, junior, Spring Hill

UTILITY: Hannah Pearce, senior, Paola

HONORABLE MENTION

INFIELD: Halle Schindler, junior, Paola; **Kayla Willey, sophomore, Louisburg**; Avery Karlin, freshman, De Soto; Kellee Wiggins, senior, Baldwin; Megan Kennedy, junior, Eudora

OUTFIELD: Alli Kerns, junior, Ottawa; Jordan Diehl, sophomore, De Soto; McKInley Markley, senior, Baldwin

CATCHER: Jocelyn Woods, senior, Ottawa; Josie Bedford, senior, De Soto; Alaina Howe, senior, Eudora

UTILITY: **Karson Griggs, junior, Louisburg**

Lady Cats come up short to Spring Hill on Senior Night



Louisburg junior Karson Griggs puts the ball in play Monday during the Lady Cats' home game with Spring Hill at Lewis-Young Park. Louisburg fell in both games, 17-2 and 17-7.

The Louisburg High School softball team took its home field for the final time Monday when it hosted Spring Hill in a doubleheader.

The two games didn’t turn out like the Lady Cats had hoped as they fell to the defending Class 4A-Division I state champion, 17-2, in the opener and then, 17-7, in the nightcap. It was also Senior Night for the Lady Cats as they honored their lone senior, Skylar Keaton, in between games.

“Spring Hill came in and made a statement early with their hitting,” Louisburg coach John Ozier said. “Game one got away from us early and we never recovered.

“Game two was a much different story. We came out and took an early lead. The girls battled hard until the sixth, when we got sloppy with our defense and lost our composure. We had plenty of scoring opportunities, including a bases loaded situation with no out, but came up empty time and time again.”

In the opener, the Lady Cats took an early 2-1 lead in the bottom of the second inning. Kayla Willey singled to bring home Molly Rison, and two batters later, Reilly Ratliff-Becher singled home Willey to give Louisburg the lead.

Spring Hill’s offense came to life as the Broncos scored four runs each in the next two innings and then had an 8-run fifth inning to break the game open. Regan Smith and Paige Cooper each had a home run for Spring Hill and Smith led the team with 5 RBIs to go along with a pair of doubles.



Louisburg senior Skylar Keaton was honored in-between games Monday during a Senior Night ceremony. Standing next Skylar are her parents Courtney and Miles Keaton.

Rison led the Louisburg offense with three hits, including a double, while Ratliff-Becher finished the game with two singles.

The Lady Cats (3-17) were able to stay with the Broncos through five innings in the second game. Louisburg took a 3-0 lead into the third inning, before Spring Hill responded with four runs.

Louisburg took the lead right back with two runs in the bottom of the third, and after trailing again, tied the game with a run in the fourth. Spring Hill, however, scored six runs in the sixth and five more in the seventh to secure the sweep.

Sophomore Shayla Meyer had two hits to lead the Lady Cat

attack, while freshman Alyse Moore had a 2-run double and Rison also had a single that scored two runs. Karson Griggs, Brooklyn Diederich and Paige Eccher also had RBIs for Louisburg. Ratliff-Becher and Maddie Svoboda each had a double as well.

The Lady Cats will enter postseason play this Monday when they travel to Ottawa for the Class 4A regional tournament. Louisburg, which is the No. 4 seed, will square off with No. 1 Paola at 3 p.m.

Lady Cats fall in doubleheader to Ottawa



Louisburg second baseman Kayla Willey makes a throw to first Tuesday during the Lady Cats' game with Ottawa. The Lady Cats lost both games of the doubleheader to Ottawa, 15-8 and 10-3.

OTTAWA – The Louisburg High School softball team went to Ottawa on Tuesday in hopes of building on its two-game winning streak.

Although they got off to a good start, the Lady Cats couldn't keep up with the Cyclones. Louisburg suffered a pair of 15-8 and 10-3 losses that saw the winning streak come to a halt.

Offense wasn’t a problem in the opener as Louisburg took a 6-3 lead into the bottom of the second, but Ottawa scored six runs in the frame and eventually built a six-run lead after four innings.

Errors didn’t help the Lady Cat cause as they committed five in the contest and Ottawa scored their 15 runs on 16 hits. Louisburg starting pitcher Shayla Meyer was knocked out of the game in the second inning when she was hit in the knee on a sharp base hit up the middle.

Freshman Brooklyn Diederich pitched the final 4-plus innings and gave up just three earned runs.

“The girls came out in game one with some great at-bats and timely hitting,” Louisburg coach John Ozier said. “Our table-setters did a nice job of getting on base for our run-producers. We had them on the ropes until they started to capitalize with some big hits and some runs on a few of our errors.

“We continue to go through some growing pains with some of our younger, less-experienced players. However, the older girls are very, very positive with their younger teammates. We continue to learn and get better on offense and defense.”

Louisburg junior Molly Rison led the Lady Cat bats with three hits and 3 RBIs, which included a double. Another junior, Maddie Svoboda, finished with two hits, including a 2-run home run in the fourth inning.

Karson Griggs, Kayla Willey and Lauren Cutshaw also had two hits each for Louisburg. Willey finished with 2 RBIs and Griggs also drove in a run.

In the second game, Svoboda again swung a hot bat for Louisburg as she added two more hits and 3 RBIs, including a 2-run home run in the third inning to help cut into the Ottawa lead. It was Svoboda’s fourth home run in as many games.

Griggs also had a pair of hits to help the Lady Cat offense, but unfortunately for Louisburg, Svoboda and Griggs were the lone players to get a hit.

The Lady Cats (3-15) trailed by just one run going into the bottom of the sixth inning, but Ottawa scored six times in the frame to pull away for a win. For the second game in a row, Louisburg committed five errors, which helped lead to six Ottawa runs.

Diederich started the second game for Louisburg and gave up four earned runs in 5-plus innings and Kelsey Higginbotham came on to provide relief in the sixth inning.

“Brooklyn pitched great until she ran out of gas after pitching in both games,” Ozier said. “Kelsey Higginbotham did a nice job in relief. As we have all season, the girls have used each and every great play or mistake made to learn and advance forward with their game.”

Louisburg will play its final regular season game today when it hosts Spring Hill for a Senior Night doubleheader. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m. at Lewis-Young Park.

Lady Cats snap losing streak with sweep of Anderson County



Louisburg junior Maddie Svoboda was greeted at home plate by her teammates Thursday following her second home run of the day against Anderson County. The Lady Cats picked up a pair of 16-1 and 11-6 victories.

For the Louisburg softball team, it was only a matter of time before things started to go its way.

That time was Thursday.

The Lady Cats plated 27 runs in their doubleheader against Anderson County at Lewis-Young Park and left with 16-1 and 11-6 victories. It was the first time Louisburg had found itself in the win column since early April and it was long overdue.

“With all the hard work the girls have put in this season, I was so excited to finally see them get a couple of wins,” Louisburg coach John Ozier said. “We have been so close in so many games. We have learned how to compete, but have just not been able to finish. So I was glad to see us get these two games.”

In the opener, the Lady Cats jumped on Anderson County from the start as they scored five runs in the first two innings. They added on six more in the third and five in the fourth to complete the run-rule win.

Maddie Svoboda hit her first of two home runs on the day, which was a 2-run shot in the bottom of the second inning. She finished the game with a home run, a double, 2 RBIs and scored

four runs.

Karson Griggs recorded a team-high three hits and had 2 RBIs to help the Lady Cat offense. Molly Rison had two hits to go along with 5 RBIs, with three of those coming home on a 3-run double in the fourth inning to seal it.

Lauren Cutshaw had two hits that included a double and 2 RBIs and Kayla Willey also finished with two hits and 2 RBIs. Shayla Meyer added two hits and an RBI for the Lady Cats.

Bailey Kern recorded a run batted in as well on a sacrifice and Paige Eccher scored two runs.

“Throughout the season, we have had many opportunities to score, but have not been able to get timely hits,” Ozier said. “The girls put together some great at-bats against Anderson County and we were able to get those timely hits.”



Louisburg’s Lauren Cutshaw slides safely into home plate Thursday against Anderson County.

Louisburg (3-13) also got a good performance on the mound from freshman Brooklyn Diederich as she earned her first varsity win. Diederich pitched a complete game and gave up just one unearned run on three hits and struck out three.

The good pitching continued in the nightcap as Meyer picked up the win for Louisburg. Meyer allowed four earned runs over seven innings and struck out five batters.

“During both games, our pitchers were able to hit their spots,” Ozier said. “Neither of the girls are overpowering with their velocity, but their ability to mix pitches and hit locations was great.

“Hopefully these wins can boost our confidence, allow the girls to relax, and play the game that I know they are capable of.”

The hot bats continued for the Lady Cats in the second game as they hit two more home runs as both Svoboda and Meyer cleared the fence. Svoboda had a 2-run home run in the bottom of the third that tied the game and Meyer’s 2-run homer in the bottom of the fifth inning broke open a tie game and gave Louisburg an 8-6 advantage.

Louisburg tacked on three more runs to help seal the sweep and Meyer was able to close the door in the final two innings.

Griggs once again led Louisburg with three hits, including a double and an RBI. Meyer and Svoboda each finished the game with two hits each and had 3 and 2 RBIs, respectively.

Reilly Ratliff-Becher added two hits, a double and an RBI, while Rison and Cutshaw ended the game with a pair of singles. Willey also had an RBI single and Alyse Moore scored three times for Louisburg.

The Lady Cats return to action today when they travel to Ottawa for a doubleheader. First pitch is set for 4:30 p.m.

Louisburg loses close contest at De Soto

Louisburg was on the verge of stealing a game on the road from De Soto last Tuesday at the 3&2 Complex in Lenexa.

With the Lady Cats up two runs in the final inning, they weren’t able to hold on against De Soto in a 6-5 loss in the opener. De Soto used that momentum in the second game to compete the sweep of Louisburg with a 13-4 win in the nightcap.

The Lady Cats scored five runs in the third inning to jump out on top and De Soto scored three in the bottom of the fourth to cut into their lead. With two outs in the bottom of the seventh, De Soto singled, reached on an error, tripled and singled again to complete the walk-off win.

Molly Rison and Maddie Svoboda each had a pair of hits to lead the Louisburg offense, while Rison added 2 RBIs to her line. Reilly Ratliff-Becher also had an RBI for the Lady Cats.



Sophomore Reilly Ratliff-Becher comes in to make a running catch last Tuesday against De Soto.

In the nightcap, Louisburg found itself down 6-4 in the sixth inning, before De Soto scored seven runs in the frame to pull away. The Lady Cats were also hurt by six errors in the field.

Lauren Cutshaw had three hits to lead Louisburg and Rison had 2 RBIs. Svoboda had a double, while Bailey Kern, Bailey Sarna, Alyse Moore and Ratliff-Becher also had hits for the Lady Cats.