

# 2020 Senior Spotlight: Kat Coolidge



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

A year ago, Kat Coolidge had a front row seat to witness Louisburg softball history.

Coolidge, who played mostly on junior varsity last season, was called up to be on the varsity roster for the postseason. She watched as the Lady Cats played the role of Cinderella as they knocked off a pair of two higher seeds on their way to a regional championship and a state tournament appearance.

“My favorite moment in playing LHS Softball was definitely winning the last regional game and advancing onto state last year,” Coolidge said. “It was the most exciting game I have ever experienced.”

It was that moment that left Coolidge wanting more as she entered her senior campaign with the Lady Cats. She was looking to make her own mark on the program and was looking forward to playing for new head coach, Nick Chapman.

Coolidge was one of seven Lady Cat seniors on the roster for the upcoming season and they were all aiming for another trip to the state tournament.

"I was super excited for this season to start and to play for Chapman since it was my final year playing, and because we had ended our previous season at state," Coolidge said. "I believe we all worked especially hard the first two weeks we did get to practice, because we all shared a common goal in that we wanted to go back to state."

Unfortunately, the unthinkable happened shortly after Spring Break when the spring season was cancelled due to the spread of COVID-19. It meant a lot of players, like Coolidge, wouldn't get that one last opportunity at representing their school.

"It has definitely been super hard," Coolidge said. "I had been looking forward to this coming season for my entire senior year, and I'm sad we never got to play a game."

The decision to cancel the season has also been hard on Chapman as he was looking forward to working with his senior class and to get his first year of coaching under his belt. He knew Coolidge was going to play a big role on the team this year.

"Kat was on my JV team last year and she had natural power at the plate," Chapman said. "When she swung and made contact, it was going for a ride. She was quiet, but had a great work ethic and passion for the game. I think this would have been a great year for Kat."

Not only will Coolidge not get the opportunity to play for Louisburg one last time, but she will also say goodbye to a sport she started playing in elementary school.

"I first started playing in third grade, but I didn't really get into the sport until sixth grade when a couple of friends recruited me to their club team," Coolidge said. "I would say softball has been a big part of my life in that it is the sport I have stuck with the longest."

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

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

**KC:** I miss seeing all my teammates at practice, and I miss playing in games.

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

**KC:** I would again say that going to State last year was my most memorable moment as an athlete, because it was so exciting.

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

**KC:** I loved being in the musicals at LHS because they were a lot of fun and I made a lot of friends while doing so.

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

**KC:** I plan on attending Loyola University New Orleans and majoring in Biology.

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

**KC:** One of my biggest accomplishments was being accepted into the Bill of Rights Institution's Constitutional Academy in Washington D.C. with a full scholarship last summer. It was one of the coolest experiences because I got to meet other students from all over America and tour the city.

## **Kat's Favorites**

**Pro athlete:** Patrick Mahomes

**Pro team:** Kansas City Royals

**College team:** KU

**Movie:** Forrest Gump

**TV Show:** The Office

**Song:** I don't have a favorite

**Band/Musician:** The Lumineers

**Pregame meal/snack:** Cheez-its

**Class/subject:** English

**Teacher and why?** I would pick Siefken because I have had her as a teacher all four years of High School and she is super fun and really nice.

### **Previous Senior Spotlights**

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

Gabby Dugger – Softball

Sydni Keagle – Track

Olivia Chase – Soccer

Colin Cook – Golf

Morgan Messer – Soccer

August Daniels – Softball

Carter Anglin – Track and Field

Hannah Straub – Soccer

Reilly Ratliff-Becher – Softball

Madden Rutherford – Baseball

Lily McDaniel – Soccer

Garrett Harding – Track

Mackenzie Scholtz – Soccer

Calvin Dillon – Golf

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# LHS sports preparing to start back up in June with summer workouts



Kansas high school sports has been absent since the middle of March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but that all could change very soon.

During its board of directors meeting earlier this month, the Kansas State High School Activities Association made a change to its summer regulations. Starting on June 1, school employed coaches may begin summer programs as long as it is permitted by the community's health authorities and the school district.

Coaches at Louisburg High School are making plans to move forward beginning the first of June, but they must meet some guidelines to do so.

In the first two calendar weeks in June, athletes will need to attend a conditioning session each day. Those must be completed to be able to participate in a coach's camp or organized competition.

If an athlete is playing football, they must complete an extra five days of conditioning before being able to participate in competition.

The first two weeks of conditioning sessions will not involve weights, indoor facilities or sporting equipment to ensure safety. Masks will be optional at workouts, but six feet of

distance will be in place along with no more than the 90 gathering restriction under the phase 3 guidelines put out by the state.

Then on June 15, barring no setbacks, conditioning will include indoor weight sessions and indoor facilities will be allowed. Coaches will also be able to hold camps and competition throughout the summer.



**Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein has plotted out summer workouts for his football team beginning with three weeks of conditioning starting June 1**

“I think the guidelines were set to help ensure the safety of all student athletes accords the state, along with their physical health as well as the preparation for the season,” Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein said. “Challenges may be there, but overall they are irrelevant as all the teams in the state have to follow the same guidelines. Our school

administrators have been very supportive throughout this process.”

Along with the new changes, KSHSAA also lifted the moratorium period at the end of the summer and will allow teams to practice all the way up to the beginning of the school year. Fall sports, however, will take precedence from Aug. 1 through Aug. 15.

For some programs, the changes won't be much different as what they have experienced in the past, other than practicing social distancing through the first two weeks of conditioning.

“We are still allowed to compete in leagues and camps after all athletes have completed 10 days of conditioning/training,” Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment said. “Our summer weights program is changing some this summer, so it gives the players a chance to acclimate back into workouts before putting a ball in their hands.

“When you really look at the schedule, we lost the first two weeks in June (in terms of volleyball skill work), but we gained the moratorium week and have full contact until August 16. The fall season starts on August 17. Normally, we can't have contact, outside of weights and conditioning, after mid-July. This actually gives us about four weeks on the back end of summer to work with the athletes.”





**Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment has her normal summer scheduled planned out despite a different start.**

Still, the new-look summer won't be without its challenges – especially in the first 10 days of the summer calendar. However, the coaches and athletes will gladly work around the new rules in order to get back together and competing again.

“I think the new guidelines will help kids get back to some normalcy as long as everything continues to get better, but the six feet of social distancing could be challenging when you are coaching a team sport,” Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. “We will find a way to overcome these challenges and help the kids develop as much as possible.”

Coaches have already altered their camp schedules for the summer, and that information, along with a list of camps, can be found [here](#).

As for Louisburg cross country, the runners will also be going through a conditioning period like everyone else. They will meet at the football practice field at 7 a.m. for an hour every morning beginning June 1 and that will continue through the summer.

Since school has been out since the middle of March, coaches have tried to find a way to stay in touch with their players – and like with online schooling – the zoom platform has been a big help for coaches.

“Football has been doing online zoom workout together for those currently in high school every Monday, Wednesday and Friday while we have been out of school, so I have still been seeing them and they have been doing some cardio,” Ebenstein said. “We have as normal of a summer planned as possible. We will have our weights sessions, our team camp, review/skills night, and we will have our contact camp that KSHSAA is allowing.”

With everything going on around the state and the country, everything is still in limbo and dates could have to be altered once again depending on what local officials decide. Even with all that, the coaches believe there will be a fall season.



**Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley has tried to keep many of his same events for both the boys and girls teams.**

"I am confident our fall season will be played," Conley said "It may have some things that are different, but we will play. I know that the boys are very anxious in having conversations with some of them."

Many of the coaches and players are just ready to return to some kind of routine following the spread of COVID-19 and they hope sports can give that to them.

"As of right now, our season is scheduled, and we'll plan accordingly if told differently," Compliment said. "But for right now, (activities director Michael) Pickman has stressed that for most of the athletes, a return to summer weights/conditioning/activities will be their first taste of 'normalcy.' I'm excited to get back at it and see the athletes

and students again.”

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## 2020 Senior Spotlight: Reilly Ratliff-Becher



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

Reilly Ratliff-Becher had the time of her life last year as she and the rest of the Lady Cat softball team captured their first regional title since 2014.

It was a season full of memorable moments as Louisburg pulled off upsets to higher seeds in the regional tournament to advance to state. As much fun as all that was, that wasn't the time that Ratliff-Becher will look back on the most when she thinks of Lady Cat softball.

“My favorite memory in softball was probably our last team dinner (which was our first) for this season,” Ratliff-Becher said. “It was my favorite because it gave me so much hope and we all got to get together outside of softball and see everyone's personalities.”

That team dinner was what Ratliff-Becher hoped was the start

of something special. Nick Chapman was named as the team's new head coach and expectations were high for the Lady Cat program.

"Since it being my senior year, I was really looking forward to it," Ratliff-Becher said. "I was very excited because Chapman wanted to make our last year the best one yet. He wanted us to leave the program on a really high note. I had great expectations for this year and hopefully it was a trip to state. We are all very versatile so if we had some adversity come upon us, we would be fine."

Ratliff-Becher was one of seven seniors on the Lady Cat team that will never get to know how it could have all ended. The spring season was cancelled due to spread of COVID-19 and the news obviously hit many of the seniors hard.

Despite all the heartache, Ratliff-Becher tried to find the 'half glass full' perspective of it all.

"I have been dealing with it pretty well," she said. "I stay positive through things like this because I think about the bigger picture as to why we have to do this. We are protecting the ones who are at most risk. When you think of other people and not yourself, it makes it harder to be negative about what you lost in this situation."

The Louisburg senior was all set to split catching duties with Lauren Cutshaw during the upcoming season, along with spending some time in the outfield. However, it was leadership that was her most valued assist.

"Rat has developed into a true leader," Chapman said. "She leads by example in everything she does. I trusted that when I needed her to do something she was going to do it with all-out effort. She was at every offseason workout and encouraged our younger players to get better every day. I think she would have had a big season."





**Senior catcher Reilly Ratliff-Becher was one of seven seniors on this year's Louisburg softball team.**

However, there will be no more putting the catcher's gear on or strolling up to the plate for Ratliff-Becher as she will now leave a sport behind that she has played since the fifth-grade – thanks to a lot of different people along the way.

"I got into this sport because of Amanda Lancaster," Ratliff-Becher said. "She asked me to play on her team and I loved it. Dave Boles, Randy Meyer, Carl Eccher and Brian Olson were also a huge part as to why I stuck with softball growing up. These people are all huge role models to me in this sport."

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

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

**RRB:** I just miss social interaction. I miss seeing all my friends and teachers, catching up with them and just going through the last few months of my high school experience.

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

**RRB:** Everything is memorable to me. I wish I didn't take anything for granted. I'm happy with what I accomplished and experienced.

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

**RRB:** Spending time with good friends. I'm pretty social and I don't know if that's considered a hobby. But, I sure do miss it.

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

**RRB:** My plans after graduation are attending Pittsburg State University and majoring in Psychology. Also rooming with Haley Cain.

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

**RRB:** Leading the band on Friday Night Football Games as a Drum Major. It was something I always dreamed of doing as a kid, just to be in that position in front of my community is a surreal feeling.

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

**RRB:** A lot of people don't know that I really like to paint and do art/craft related things.

## **Reilly's Favorites**

**Pro athlete:** Patrick Mahomes

**Pro team:** Kansas City Chiefs

**Movie:** Remember the Titans

**TV Show:** One Tree Hill

**Song:** Does To Me by Luke Combs

**Band/Musician:** Luke Combs

**Pregame meal/snack:** Apples

**Class/subject:** Weights

**Teacher:** There are so many I want to put, but Mrs. Wright stands out the most to me. She helped me through a lot of personal stuff. And she still did even when she moved school districts. I appreciate her never judging what I was feeling.

## **Previous Senior Spotlights**

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer



Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

Gabby Dugger – Softball

Sydni Keagle – Track

Olivia Chase – Soccer

Colin Cook – Golf

Morgan Messer – Soccer

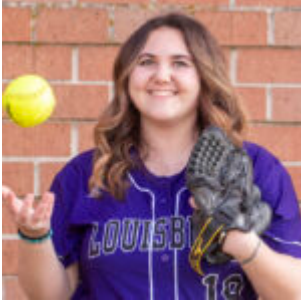
August Daniels – Softball

Carter Anglin – Track and Field

Hannah Straub – Soccer

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## **2020 Senior Spotlight: August Daniels**



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

August Daniels faced a lot of adversity last season as a pitcher for the Louisburg softball team, and a player in that position always does.

That helped her become a stronger player, but a couple months before the start of the season, Daniels faced something she might not be able to overcome. The Wildcat senior suffered a hip injury and was trying to do physical therapy to be able to play later in the year.

New Louisburg softball coach Nick Chapman tried to encourage Daniels through the process and there was some hope she would be able to get back on the mound again.

"I was really looking forward to this season," Daniels said. "I really wasn't sure if I was going to be able to play this season, though. Chapman still allowed me to be part of the team and help out at practices even though I couldn't do much. He had full faith that I would recover and be able to play at least by the end of the season."

Daniels played a big role for the Lady Cats last season as she was one of the team's starting pitchers and also pitched in Louisburg's run to a regional title a year ago. Despite the injury, Chapman saw a lot of leadership from Daniels in her final season.

"My heart goes out for August," Chapman said. "She was hurt to

start the year, with hopes of getting to finish it out towards the end of April/going into regionals. She was going to be one of our main pitchers this year. She had great accuracy and was able to mix up batters.

“Even though she wasn’t able to practice in those first couple weeks, she was an extension of the coaching staff. When we needed someone to throw to batters or help out with our younger players, she was on it and made everyone better. She was all in on this season, even though she couldn’t play until the end of it.”

Obviously that final season never happened as spring sports were cancelled across the country due to the spread of COVID-19. It was news that left Daniels and the rest of her teammates in shock.

“I was devastated when I heard the news,” Daniels said. “I immediately broke down in tears. It was unreal and I couldn’t really wrap my head around it at first. However, they did what they had to do. I wish we would’ve at least gotten to play that first game, but I’m thankful that we had the practices and time together as a team that we did.”

Although there was no official senior season for her, Daniels will still take with her those memories from the Lady Cats’ run to a state tournament last season. It was a season full of ups and downs, but one that ended on a high note.



**Senior pitcher August Daniels was hoping to bounce back from an injury to pitch later this season.**

"My favorite memory is winning regionals and going to state," Daniels said. "We've always been the sport that gets looked down on and that a lot of people don't really pay much attention to, but I think winning regionals really changed people's views of us. Getting to experience that and going to state will be something I'll always remember and cherish. Although we didn't make it very far at state, just being able to say that I got to pitch in a state game will be something I'm proud of. It was a great memory to end my high school season with."

Softball has been a big part of Daniels' life as of late, but it hasn't always been that way. In fact, she didn't get started in the game until middle school, but it has left her with no regrets.

"I started playing softball since I was about 12 or 13," Daniels said. "Before I had played like t-ball and coach pitch, but it wasn't for very long. My brother, however, played baseball and I remember watching him in his games and was jealous of how much fun he was having and that's when I told my parents I wanted to play softball. That was probably the best decision I ever made. It went from being on just a rec team and leading the game for a couple years, and then I was asked to play on a competitive team.

"Softball is a huge part of my life. To me softball isn't only a game, but it's a lifestyle. Stepping onto that field took all my other thoughts away. If I was having a bad day or something was bothering me, the field took all of that away. Nothing else mattered but what was going on in the field."

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

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

**AD:** I've missed my friends and seeing everyone at school, and of course, softball.

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

**AD:** As an athlete, my most memorable moment was every time I stepped on that varsity mound. Every strike or strikeout. I've never really been someone who likes to be the center of attention or someone who likes to be watched doing things, but for some reason when I was on that mound all those thoughts went away. I wasn't worried about messing up or people watching my every move. I was in control and the game was all I was focused on.

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

**AD:** Probably fishing or playing with my dogs. Fishing is really calming and a nice way to relax and I love animals so of course playing with my dogs is always exciting.

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

**AD:** I haven't quite figured that out yet. I've been thinking about just going to a community college and getting my gen ed's out of the way until I figure out what I want to major in.

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

**AD:** I'm most proud of how far I've come as a pitcher. When I first starting playing softball I would have never of guessed that I would have even consider pitching let alone getting to pitch at a high level. I look back to when I first started pitching to now and how far I have actually come and it just amazes me.

## **August's Favorites**

**Pro athlete:** Mike Moustakas

**Pro team:** Kansas City Royals

**College team:** Kansas

**Movie:** Bridge to Terabithia

**TV Show:** 9-1-1

**Song:** Cover Me Up by Morgan Wallen

**Band/Musician:** Jon Pardi or Morgan Wallen

**Pregame meal/snack:** Chicken Alfredo

**Class/subject:** Culinary

**Teacher and why:** Mr. Worthington. I only got to have him as a freshman for math, but I loved having him. He made class enjoyable and math not so terrible. I am not a math person at all but I always looked forward to going to his class. Even after not having his class anymore, seeing him in the hallway and talking to him was always nice.

## **Previous Senior Spotlights**

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

Gabby Dugger – Softball

Sydni Keagle – Track

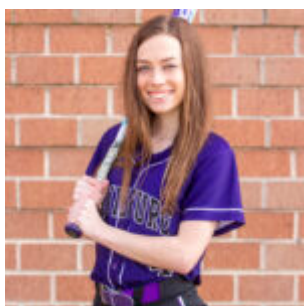
Olivia Chase – Soccer

Colin Cook – Golf

Morgan Messer – Soccer

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## 2020 Senior Spotlight: Gabby Dugger



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

Gabby Dugger wasn't a member of last season's regional championship team, but that doesn't mean she didn't have high expectations for this year's Louisburg softball squad.

Dugger watched as the Lady Cats recorded back-to-back upsets to capture their first regional crown since 2014 and she wanted to be a part of that atmosphere. She was even more excited to see Nick Chapman take over the program in his first



year as varsity head coach.

“Coach Chapman showed this team the importance of being a family within the first day of tryouts,” Dugger said. “He emphasized encouragement and positivity, which is what a team feeds off of. Coach Chapman genuinely wants the best for not only the team, but for each individual player. Whether it was on the field or in the hallways, coach was always there for us.

“This season, we wanted that state title. Last year was a landmark season for Louisburg softball, and with the team we had this year, we had a good shot at state again.”

Dugger was all set to compete for a starting spot in the outfield and Chapman liked what he saw from her through the first couple weeks of practice.

“From the get-go, she was all in and a great addition to the team,” Chapman said. “She was great in the outfield; very quick and read balls off the bat very well. Gabby would have made a great impact on our team this year. I thank her for her commitment and passion she brought every day.”

As well as practice had been going, all the players’ work going into the season was ended due to the spread of COVID-19 as spring sports around the country was canceled.

It was a decision that was tough to handle for Dugger and the rest of her teammates, but she has tried to put things in perspective.

“The cancellation of my senior year has hit pretty hard,” Dugger said. “All the things that were promised to me since I was in kindergarten were ripped away from me. Although this has been difficult, I think about all the healthcare workers who are risking their lives, the families who have lost loved ones, and the government officials who work tirelessly every day to keep us safe. Understanding the seriousness of this

situation, and knowing that I am not going through this alone, helps me every day.”

Although Dugger found herself on the varsity team for the first time this season, softball is not a sport that is new to her – in fact – she has spent most of her life around it.

Softball and baseball are big parts of her family and that is how she grew up in the game.

“I have played softball since I was 7-years-old,” Dugger said. “I remember when I caught my first pop-fly at shortstop, I couldn’t stop smiling. Baseball/softball is a tradition in my family. My grandpa taught me how to play catch when I was really little, and my dad played Little League Baseball when he was younger. My entire childhood consisted of playing catch in the backyard, my dad critiquing my swings, and tournaments every weekend. Every scorching hot tournament and every freezing cold practice made me the player I am today.

“I made countless lifelong friendships through this game. I am so thankful that my parents supported my love for the game and let me compete in this amazing sport. Softball is my passion, and I hope one day I can teach my kids the game.”

As much as she misses her teammates and coaches, Dugger has a lot of great memories with her team – even if it was just a short time.

“My favorite memory playing for Louisburg softball would have to be the team bonding,” she said. “Going out to dinner, or just having cookouts, gave a team connection on and off the field. There was never a dull moment with this team.”

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

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

**GD:** During this time, I am really missing my friends. This is supposed to be a memorable time for seniors with prom, sports and graduation, but these things are not going to happen. I wish I could have known on March 13, that it was the last time I would walk out of my high school. I miss seeing my teachers every day, being able to go eat out and just being a teenager.

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

**GD:** My most memorable moment as an athlete has definitely been the kids who come out to every game and look up to us. Those kids cheer us on and are just so supportive of our team. I know exactly how those kids feel, because I was one of those kids! It is just an amazing feeling to know that your community has your back.

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

**GD:** My favorite thing to do outside of sports is definitely working out or spending time with friends.

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

**GD:** After graduation, I will be attending the University of Kansas to study Nursing.

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

**GD:** Outside of sports, an accomplishment I am proud of is my dedication to maintaining a good GPA.

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

**GD:** One thing people probably don't know about me is that I'm surprisingly really good at NBA 2K basketball. My family refuses to play with me anymore because they think I cheat, but it's just a hidden talent I guess.

## **Gabby's Favorites**

**Pro athlete:** Kelly Oubre

**Pro team:** Kansas City Chiefs

**College team:** Kansas

**Movie:** Waterboy

**TV Show:** Grey's Anatomy

**Song:** Anything by Luke Combs

**Band/Musician:** Luke Combs or Parker McCollum

**Pregame meal/snack:** I've always had a bagel and Gatorade since I was little.

**Class/subject:** Biology

**Teacher and why:** Mr. Wright, he knew how to teach in a way that kept kids engaged.

## **Previous Senior Spotlights**

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

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## Pickman named as new LHS activities director



Michael Pickman (left) was hired as Louisburg High School's new activities director and assistant principal last week following the USD Board of Education meeting. Current Louisburg AD, Scott Hinkle (right), will move to the middle

**school to serve in the same capacity starting next school year.**

Louisburg High School will have a little different look to its activities department for the 2020-21 school year.

Following the USD 416 Board of Education meeting on April 13, Michael Pickman was hired to serve as the school's new assistant principal and activities director. Pickman will replace Scott Hinkle, who has been in that position for the last two years.

Hinkle will remain in the district and will move over to the middle school to serve in the same capacity.

"I had known for a while that I wanted to continue my education by getting a second master's degree, but I didn't really know which area," Pickman said. "I talked with current administration and was both inspired and encouraged to explore administrative leadership. This is the job I wanted because it meant staying in Louisburg and continuing to work with the staff and coaches who I know have, can and will achieve great things when it comes to our students and student athletes.

"We are a Louisburg family and I want my daughter in the Louisburg community and school system, so I wouldn't have done this anywhere else. The atmosphere from district leadership to the building leadership is top notch and I am ready to grow as an educator and work alongside (principal) Jeremy (Holloway) and the administrative staff at the high school and the amazing coaches and support them."

Pickman has taught English at the high school for the last seven years and has also worked in the Prairie View, West Franklin and Maur Hill Prep school districts.

He has also spent a lot of time in the athletic arena as he has served as the Wildcat boys and girls soccer assistant coach, alongside head coach Kyle Conley, for the last five-

plus years.

“It will be tough to give up all aspects of it, but the magic of these soccer programs will be especially difficult,” Pickman said. “Kyle has been an amazing person to coach with and his passion is contagious. Getting to start the girls program with him and the immediate success has been amazing. State finals and big wins and the atmosphere – some don’t ever get to experience that – and lastly the players, both boys and girls who have graduated and those who remain to carry on the greatness are why I said yes to coaching. They make the whole experience amazing and fun.

“So it will be hard, but I would also not have gone anywhere else to do a different job and so I will still be able to support the soccer players and every other student and athlete through my new opportunity and to do so the Wildcat Way.”

As for Hinkle, he spent the last two years as the LHS activities director after coming from Liberal High School. He is excited that his new position at the middle school will allow him to spend more time with family.

“I really enjoyed my time at the high school, even though it was only two years,” Hinkle said. “I am leaving behind a great workplace with a great culture and an unbelievable staff. It was not an easy decision.

“I made the move to the middle school to get back some evenings and weekends. I have been an athletic director for 11 years at the high school level in my career, and I was ready to free up some time. I know I am joining another great staff at LMS, and look forward to the new challenge ahead of me.”

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# 2020 Senior Spotlight: Lauren Cutshaw



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

Softball was a way of life for Lauren Cutshaw, and it has been ever since she was a little kid.

Starting in T-Ball, and working her way up through the softball ranks, it has provided her with a getaway and her passion for the sport only grew as she got older.

“Softball has always been a huge part of my life, and my family’s life for years and years,” Cutshaw said. “I played competitive softball year-round and summer it was softball every, and all weekend. I would practice during the week, along with catching and hitting lessons with former Royals catcher Mike Macfarlane.

“Softball was a life commitment for me. In the fall and spring it was the same thing, but I loved it. I had some great relationships with my teammates spending so much time together and we all had so much fun. I sure am going to miss this sport. It really was a piece of me for so long and my family was always there with me.”

Fast forward to her junior year in high school and Cutshaw had one of the best moments in her young life. Cutshaw and the



Louisburg softball team upset their way to a regional championship in Ottawa and earned a spot in the state tournament for the first time since 2014.

The Lady Cats defeated Ottawa and then rallied for a win against Chanute in the championship to advance to state.

“My favorite memory would have to be regionals junior year because in high school that is the best we have ever played as a team,” Cutshaw said. To come out and beat the odds of winning was just so amazing. (Coach John) Ozier was so proud of us, and what a way to go with that being his last season as our coach. I was so happy to be a part of our team going to state and it made it even more special for me that I caught all the regional games. It was so much fun and I am glad I have those memories.”

For her senior season, the Lady Cats welcomed former JV coach Nick Chapman as the team’s new varsity coach and Cutshaw was excited to see what her final year had in store.

“I was looking forward to my senior season way more than any other season,” Cutshaw said. “I knew that Chapman had been working ever since the end of last season as soon as he found out he was going to be head coach. He worked so hard for this season to be different than any other one. We were all so lucky to have a coach this dedicated. We were working hard toward another chance at state this season, and Chapman never let us forget that we were playing for a purpose and together as a team.”

Cutshaw was slated to play a vital role on the team as she would split time at catcher with fellow senior Reilly Ratliff-Becher and would also see time in the outfield. It was a role that she accepted and embraced and she was one of seven seniors on this year’s Lady Cat team.

“Lauren was another great senior leader for us,” Chapman said. “She dedicated herself to getting better each and every day.

She played a role in helping start to change the culture of this program. Lauren led with actions every day, on and off the field, and she brought humor and cheerfulness that made practices fun.”



**Louisburg senior Lauren Cutshaw was one of seven returning seniors to the program this year.**

After a couple weeks of practices, many of the players realized this season was never going to happen. Over spring break, the players were informed by Chapman that their season was canceled due to the spread of COVID-19.

It was difficult news to take, especially for Cutshaw, as the sport she loved growing up would be prematurely taken from her. There will be no more softball in her future, but despite the heartache, she is learning and growing from this experience.

"Pretty much the only way to deal with the cancellation of the season is to know that this is all God's plan," Cutshaw said. "He has greater things in store and bigger plans than we can imagine and he is in control. Senior year is just a little glimpse of life and all that will happen and you can't let one hardship set you back from what all you can do. I have been praying and just trying to make the best out of this terrible situation."

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

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

**LC:** I miss all my friends and the time together as a team. I miss the coaches because they were so impactful to us. Practices were so fun this year, we listened to music while getting a lot of practice in. I looked forward to all the new drills and things we did and Chapman was such a fun coach. I could already tell that this season was going to be my favorite. Chapman had put so much heart into this season for us girls, so it makes me sad knowing I will never get to know the outcome.

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

**LC:** Going to football games and dressing up for the different themes.

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

**LC:** I love shopping and hanging out with my friends, I love being social and in the summer I enjoy going swimming and occasionally go fishing.

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

**LC:** I plan to attend Missouri State University and work towards my Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Although I will not be playing softball in college, it was one of the hardest and drawn out decisions I've ever made. I had to come to the realization that my career and education is what is more important and I did not want the hassle of trying to do both, especially with nursing. I had multiple people, even college coaches, tell me that wasn't a good idea.

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

**LC:** I am proud to say that I have my CNA license and I've had it since junior year and I am in the process now to get my CMA. I really enjoy working in healthcare and cannot wait to become a nurse and learn so much to be able to help people.

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

**LC:** Most people only think i'm a girly girl, but i love catching craw dads in the creek and snakes don't bother me.

## **Lauren's Favorites**

**Pro athlete:** Salvador Perez

**Pro team:** N/A

**College team:** N/A

**Movie:** Grown Ups

**TV Show:** Grey's Anatomy

**Song:** Blessings by Florida Georgia Line

**Band/Musician:** Jason Aldean

**Pregame meal/snack:** Spicy Italian Subway sandwich with Cheetos

**Class/subject:** Allied Health Program that I took at FSCC through the high school.

**Teacher and why:** Mrs. Quinn, she has been an amazing advisory teacher all four years and she always made class fun, too.

### **Previous Senior Spotlights**

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O'Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

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## **2020 Senior Spotlight: Allie**

# Boles



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

Softball holds a special place in the heart of Allie Boles.

Boles has been playing the sport for as long as she could remember and she grew up always with a bat in her hand. Her father, Dave, brought her up in the sport and coached her till she was 17.

It has been a big part of her life and gave her things that will remain with her forever.

“Softball isn’t just a sport, it’s a way of living life in my opinion,” Boles said. “It brings a lot of life lessons to you. You meet a lot of people. The game of softball to me is unexplainable – you have to love it and know who you want to be on that field for. Softball is and will always be a part of my life. I have big goals and dreams that I look forward to accomplishing.”

After not playing for the Louisburg program since her freshman year, Boles was excited to join her friends and go on one final run her senior season.

“I was super excited and I really wanted to make some memories with some of the girls I used to play with,” Boles said. “I was excited to be coached by coach (Nick) Chapman because he



knows a lot about the game and how it goes. I thought we could have been really good this year, not only because of the skill we improved on, but the team's chemistry was built strong over those few weeks."

Boles was slated to be a starter and one of the Lady Cats' biggest bats in their lineup this season, but when she got word that their season was over due to the spread of COVID-19, her heart sank.

"When I first found out I was with my friends," Boles said. "We found out over a phone call from one of our moms. Hearing her cry and the news that our senior year, and all that we have been looking forward to, had been ripped away from us made us pretty emotional. There were a lot of tears shed.

"Driving by the school, football field and softball fields gives me a pain in my chest every time. I think when you play ball with anyone they automatically become your family and having that ripped away from you hurts. We've all been in touch and getting through it together."

The Lady Cats were on a mission in 2020 to try and earn another trip to state after winning a regional championship a year ago. Boles figured to be a big part of that run, along with the six other seniors on the team.

"She has a bright future in softball," Chapman said. "She has raw talent that I am excited to see grow at the next level. I think she would have had a huge year and helped our team take the next step along with the rest of these seniors. She committed to this team from the very beginning and demonstrated what it means to play with passion. I am very grateful for her leadership and excited to see what her softball future holds."



**Louisburg senior Allie Boles was excited to return to the Lady Cat program.**

Softball still figures to be a fixture in Boles' life moving forward as she has signed to play in college and is looking forward to growing even more in the sport. Still, she has several fond memories of her short time with the Lady Cat program.

"One of my favorite moments was one of the last moments I was with them," Boles said. "We had a team dinner on what we didn't know would be our last day, and during that time we grew together. It felt like a family that had known each other forever, even though it had been a couple short hours. We were playing games all night and laughing, throwing hot dogs at each other and just being goofy."

Other than softball, Louisburg Sports Zone also had a chance



to catch up with Allie on how she has been coping with an early end to her senior year and some of her other interests. Here are her responses from the rest of our Q&A.

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

**AB:** Honestly, I have been missing the people more than anything. I wish I could be walking down those hallways one more time, or riding to the games on the bus jamming out with the girls. I wish I could have the anxiety of getting ready for finals again, knowing my class is having that same feeling. I would go through all the hard times if it means we could go back to school again. It's really just shocking that the true meaning of high school is over.

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

**AB:** I think my freshman year of basketball was the most fun time of my life. That group of girls are some of my closest friends and playing with them was super fun.

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

**AB:** I really like to explore, or be with my friends outside or just driving around with the sunroof open. As long as I'm with the people that I love, then I'll be having a good time.

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

**AB:** After graduation, I will be attending Temple College in Texas to continue my academic and softball career. My goal is to transfer to Oklahoma State after that. I am still undecided on a major at this time.

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

**AB:** I think my greatest accomplishment was finishing with a B in College Algebra. When it comes to math I'm not the best, so I was pretty proud.

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

**AB:** I would say people don't know about my eye. One pupil is larger than the other because I had surgery when I was a baby and they accidentally cut it making it larger and a darker shade.

## **Allie's Favorites**

**Pro athlete:** Sydney Romero

**Pro team:** Pride Softball

**College team:** Oklahoma State or University of Oklahoma

**Movie:** Any Marvel movie

**TV Show:** The 100

**Song:** Better Off Gone or Homemade

**Band/Musician:** Cody Johnson

**Pregame meal/snack:** Fruit Roll-Up, orange and a granola bar

**Class/subject:** Biology

**Teacher and why:** I like too many to pick a favorite

## **Previous Senior Spotlights**

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Girls Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

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## 2020 Senior Spotlight: Kayla Willey



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

Earning a spot and playing in a state tournament gave Kayla Willey memories that will last a lifetime.

Willey and the Lady Cats upset their way to a regional championship last season after entering the tournament with a 6-14 record. A pair of wins over Ottawa and Chanute put the Lady Cats in the state tournament for the first time since 2014.

Louisburg would end up losing to No. 1 seed Andale in the first round of state a week later, but the experience was something Willey won't soon forget.

"I think the best moment for me was last year at state and how

we got there,” Willey said. “We finally came together as a team and played our hearts out. When we got to the hotel for state, we just had so much fun. Even though we lost, we had an experience of a lifetime and made bonds and memories to last us forever.”

As much fun as that was, Willey was looking forward to another shot at a state tournament. Louisburg was going to do it with a new coach as Nick Chapman moved from junior varsity to varsity head coach and replaced John Ozier.

“I was so excited to play with coach Chap this season,” Willey said. “We had all put in so much work and in those first weeks and I had already been seeing so many improvements in the team. I think we could have really pulled together our wins this year and done great things.”

The worst part is the Lady Cats will never know what could have been as spring sports across the state of Kansas was shelved due to the spread of COVID-19 back in March.

It was difficult news to hear for Willey as she will likely never play softball again – a sport that has been a staple in her life.

“I have played softball since about T-ball age,” Willey said. “My dad played baseball and our parents always let their kids try every sport we wanted. I tried softball and just instantly fell in love with the sport. I just picked up everything about the sport so fast. It has been a huge part of my life. It has run my life from start to finish. I have lived and breathed softball. It has helped me make friendships that I will have for the rest of my life. It has made me who I am.”



**Louisburg senior Kayla Willey was a returning starter off of last season's regional championship team.**

Willey has been a big part of the Lady Cat team the last two seasons. She earned All-Frontier League honorable mention honors as a sophomore as she split time between second base and the outfield, and was a key contributor on their regional championship team.

"Willey would have been our starting centerfielder this year," Chapman said. "She had a lot of speed to chase down a fly-ball and is very quick on the basepaths. Kayla always brought a great attitude and brought cheerfulness that lightened up practice, which was much needed. She really accepted the role of senior leader. When I couldn't get to the younger players to help them with something, she was all over it; whether it be helping them with their swing or outfield technique."

Those are the memories Willey will try to hold on to when

times get tough as the final two months of her high school career come to a close.

“It has been really hard,” Willey said. “I had planned to play college ball, but I just recently decided that I was not going to play in college. So this last high school season was my last chance to leave behind my legacy and step onto that field knowing this was the sport that changed my life. I have been really sad that I won’t get to finish my senior year as planned. I wanted to have my last prom, walk across the stage for graduation and have my last memories with my class.”

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

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

**KW:** I miss the softball team. I just miss practices and getting to be with all of them.

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

**KW:** It has to be getting to go to Indiana for FFA nationals. I loved getting to spend a week away from home, with friends. It was such an experience and I’m glad I got to have it during my senior year.

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

**KW:** I like to ride horses. I love the relaxation of going on trail rides, but the real fun is getting to an open field and going as fast as the horse can go. I just like the freedom.

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

**KW:** I plan to go to Johnson County Community College for the first two years and then maybe go to the University of Central Missouri to study criminal psychology.

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

**KW:** I would have to say getting the opportunity to be Mr. Holloway's assistant for TA was the best accomplishment I achieved, at least recently.

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

**KW:** I don't think a lot of people know that I love Spiderman. I have seen all the Spiderman movies and love them all.

## **Kayla's Favorites**

**Pro athlete:** Patrick Mahomes

**Pro team:** Kansas City Chiefs

**College team:** K-State

**Movie:** A Quiet Place

**TV Show:** Criminal Minds or Vampire Diaries

**Song:** What She Wants Tonight by Luke Bryan

**Band/Musician:** Trace Adkins

**Pregame meal/snack:** Pickles

**Class/subject:** Ag

**Teacher and why:** Mr. Morgan – he always makes me laugh. He's pretty crazy and it just makes class that much more fun.

## **Previous Senior Spotlights**

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Girls Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

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# Players, coaches mourn loss of spring sports season



**Louisburg softball, along with the rest of the Wildcat spring sports teams, saw their season come to a close with the spread of COVID-19.**

It has been almost a week since Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly closed all schools for the rest of the 2019-20 school year due to the spread of COVID-19.

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

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



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

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

There would be no game days, no Senior Nights and no postseason runs. Athletes had to figure out how to cope with this fact – and in many cases – are still trying to do so.

## **GIRLS SOCCER**

Mackenzie Scholtz didn't spend as much of her Spring Break relaxing with family and friends as she wanted.

Instead, she found herself focused on social media, constantly checking updates on what was going to happen with the rest of her senior year. She was scared that her final soccer season was going to be taken away from her.

Turns out, those fears became a reality.

"When I read it for the first time, I just couldn't believe it," Scholtz said. "I immediately broke down in tears. I think I cried for about four hours non-stop just thinking that I would never get to step on that field with my best friends

ever again. I had such high hopes for this season too and had been so excited all year.”

Before this all came about, none of the 12 Louisburg seniors had any idea they had already played their last match as a Wildcat.

The senior class of Scholtz, Avery O’Meara, Erin Lemke, Lily McDaniel, Ashley Moore, Trinity Moore, Skylar Bowman, Haley Cain, Hannah Straub, Olivia Chase, Andie Masten and Morgan Messer provided Wildcat coach Kyle Conley with a lot of good memories, which left the news even harder to stomach.

Louisburg was looking for its fourth consecutive state final four appearance after earning second place finishes the last two seasons.

“The decision absolutely broke my heart,” Conley said. “I couldn’t in a million years fathom something like this could happen. I honestly felt the cancellation was harsh this early, but would have rather like to have seen a postponement and then reevaluate at a later date.

This group of 12 seniors was going to be very special. If they would have returned to the state final four this season, they would have been one of only two 4A-1A teams to do this improbable feat. This group was 44-18-1 in their three years. I would be willing to bet this is the most successful program over

those three years in regards to win percentage. Obviously, winning state championships would trump that, but we were extremely successful."

The one thing that has helped players get past this disappointment is that there are so many seniors to lean on and they have done a lot of that this past week.

"The amount of support from this team has helped me so much," Scholtz said. "As soon as we found out that we would no longer play, all of us seniors were sending nothing but love to one another as well as to the whole team. Individually, there were many messages sent showing how much we love each other and that this would get better. Coach Conley and the younger girls also shared a lot of great messages as well. Hearing positive words is really helping me get through this whole thing."



## **The 2020 Louisburg High School girls soccer team**

Many of the 12 seniors and their parents were a part of the group that helped raise money to start the Louisburg program nearly five years ago. They had always dreamed of winning a state title, but the wondering what could have happened is the worst part for a lot of them.

“This group had three goals: they wanted to win a league title, to win a regional championship and finally win a state championship,” Conley said. “This would have been our program’s fifth year and everything was built for this season. I believed in this group and I felt we were going to compete for that league title and we were going to go back to the state final four. We wanted three banners: league title, regional championship, and a state championship. It’s so sad that we will never get the opportunity to show the state what this team is capable of accomplishing.”

## **BASEBALL**

Kade Larson was all set to begin his first season as the head baseball coach at Louisburg High School.

Larson, who was hired late last spring, was looking forward to leading his alma mater and had high expectations for a group that was young, but returned experience from the year before.

Then came the news from KSHSAA to cancel spring activities, which left Larson, and the rest of the Wildcat program, speechless – including seniors Madden Rutherford, Andrew Krause and Kaden Oehlert.

"To say I am disappointed is an understatement," Larson said. "I was very excited for this upcoming year. Being my first year as head coach I was more than ready to get the season underway and see what kind of team we had. I thought we could do some great things this year with the group that we were working with. For the short time we were able to practice, they had a great chemistry and worked super hard.

"I feel terrible for all the players having to lose a season like this, especially the seniors. Madden Rutherford and Andrew Krause were showing great leadership skills and I hate that they had their final season taken away. They are unprecedented times that I never thought would happen."

Rutherford, who is a two-time All-Frontier League player himself, was ready to make one final run with the Wildcats. Even though he has signed to play baseball for Washington University in St. Louis, he regrets not being able to have one final run in high school.

"Personally I was just ready to just play ball again," Rutherford said. "My football season ended with an injury, and two surgeries later I was just starting to get back into the swing of things. I was excited for the baseball team this season; we had a different looking coaching staff and a different mentality which was

evident at practice. I'll always be left wondering what could have happened."



**Senior Madden Rutherford, along with fellow seniors Andrew Krause and Kaden Oehlert, all saw their high school careers come to a close with the spread of COVID-19.**

As

difficult as it was for the seniors, the junior class will also have some

obstacles to overcome – especially for those who are wanting to play at the college level.

"To go with the seniors, this is also horrible for the juniors," Larson said. "Junior year is a big recruiting time and a lot of these guys are missing that. So all around this just is a bad time for an athlete, but I know they will



work through it  
and come back next year ready to go.”

Even  
with all the hardships athletes are facing, including the loss  
of a season,  
several are trying to find the silver lining in it all.

“The  
whole COVID-19 situation has made me appreciate what I have,”  
Rutherford said. “It’s  
hard to truly recognize how nice you have things until they’re  
taken away. I  
just hope and pray that things don’t escalate further.”

## **TRACK AND FIELD**

Carlee  
Gassman and Sydni Keagle were ready for the seasons of their  
lives on the track  
this season.

Gassman,  
who is a returning a state medalist in the hurdles, was  
considered one of the  
best returning 300-meter hurdlers in Class 4A. As for Keagle,  
she finished one  
spot away from a state medal last year in the 100 hurdles.

Both  
Louisburg seniors had high hopes, as did the rest of the Lady  
Cat track team  
that was ranked high in Class 4A in the preseason. That made  
the news of  
canceling spring sports all the more crushing.

“I honestly couldn’t believe it,” Keagle said. “At first I  
was in shock and then I was just incredibly sad at this loss  
of opportunity and

it's taken a while to come to terms with the fact that I won't be able to compete in my favorite sport one last time."

Gassman felt much the same way as she earned three state medals as season ago. Along with sophomore Delaney Wright, who garnered four state medals, the two athletes figured to score a lot of points for the Lady Cats this season.

"When I heard the last quarter of my senior year was cancelled and knowing track would be over as well, I found myself crying about not having school," Gassman said. "I never thought I'd find myself crying over school. I am just trying to keep my head high – there are better things to come."

Girls coach John Reece said there were 34 out for track before the team departed for Spring Break, which was one of the bigger groups the Lady Cats have had in several years.





**The Louisville 4×400 relay of (from left) Carlee Gassman, Rain Pugh, Sydni Keagle and Delaney Wright were some of several returning Lady Cats trying for a big state performance.**

“It is a huge bummer that everything got nixed,” Reece said. “We had a chance to do some great things this track season on the girls side. We could have been a top three team at state with a handful of very talented girls. My heart goes out to the girls and the missed opportunity for them.”

The same could be said for the boys as the Wildcats featured a big roster of 74 athletes and Louisville would have been competitive in most events throughout the season.

"I am just extremely disappointed," boys coach Andy Wright said. "We had 74 boys out, which is the biggest number we have had in several years. We had multiple state qualifiers returning as well as some newcomers that could have helped contribute to a successful year."

One of those qualifiers was javelin thrower Michael Waldron. The Louisburg senior finished just a few feet away from earning a state medal a season ago, and now his attempt at getting there has been dashed.

"It's really hard to describe the disappointment I had when I heard that I wouldn't be able to throw javelin this year," Waldron said. "It was tough and very hard to wrap my mind around, it's tough knowing that I had about a week of practice under my belt and a lot of preparation for the first meet of the year. Just finding out I wouldn't be competing at all was crushing."

The season was an important one, not only to Waldron, but to the rest of the track seniors as well. Anthony Davis (distance), Trent Martin (pole vault), Charlie Koontz (sprints, relays), Carter Anglin (discus), Garrett Harding (shot put) and Indy Strumillo (jumps) were all in their final year and were excited with what lied ahead. A few of them had already made plans to work out together over Spring Break to get some extra work in.

"I texted Carter Anglin and Garrett Harding about the fact

that our season was over, since we all threw together," Waldron said. "It was tough for Carter because I knew he was thinking about a possible state appearance this year. For Garrett, it was his first year but he had some good success in the first few weeks with throwing shot put, so I know he was excited. It's just a bummer and we have texted each other, and comforted one another. We are just still in shock – it was like a slap in the face."

## **GOLF**

Calvin Dillon has already had the best career in Louisburg High School golf history, and he accomplished that after his junior season.

Still, he wanted a lot more.

Dillon, who is a three-time state medalist, was looking for that elusive state championship this year and was considered one of the favorites going into the season. With the cancellation of spring sports it left Dillon, like many others, wondering 'What if?'

"It was definitely hard to hear that the regular season, as well as postseason were canceled," Dillon said. "It seemed like it happened all of a sudden. When you hear of professional and collegiate seasons being cancelled, you feel some remorse and disappointment for them, but when your own season gets cancelled, it becomes real."

The remorse for his own season wasn't what Dillon was feeling. It was the fact that he had hoped to lead a team – full of

seniors – to its second consecutive state tournament appearance.

Seniors Drake Varns, Garrett Rolofson, Ryan Haight and Colin Cook all returned from that team, while other seniors like David Perentis, Deven Wieland and Luke Wickersham were also trying to vie for the final spots.



**Five of the six golfers from Louisburg's state team returned in 2020 to try and make another trip to the state tournament. (From left) Colin Cook, Drake Varns, Calvin Dillon, Ryan Haight and Garrett Rolofson.**

"We definitely had high expectations for this season," Dillon said. "With the heavy amount of seniors on the team, as well as our regional and state experience last year, we were really excited. I think the most disappointing thing for all of us is going to be the lack of

closure. We were  
all looking forward to one last go-around, and to have our  
season disappear in  
a matter of days is devastating.”

Like with every other conflict in life, the Wildcats are  
trying to make sense of it all and find a positive side to  
what has been a  
forgetful week.

“One  
positive that comes from this situation is the gratitude we  
will now have for  
our everyday lives,” Dillon said. “You never know when  
something catastrophic  
like this can happen, and we need to be thankful for the life  
we do have.  
Although this situation is disappointing for us, it was  
ultimately God’s plan.  
He is the one that is in control, and if we seek him in this  
time of  
discomfort, we will find the closure and satisfaction that we  
lost along with  
our senior season.”

## **GIRLS SWIMMING**

It was  
an historic season before it even started as Louisburg would  
join the  
Osawatomie-Paola girls swim team for the first time this year.

Unfortunately,  
thanks to the pandemic spreading across the country, history  
will have to take  
a back seat for another year.

Head  
coach Maddie Carrigan was in her first year with the program

after assisting  
with the boys team last winter, so finding out the news with  
everyone else was  
a little tough to take.

“It  
was really upset when I heard the news,” Carrigan said.  
“Obviously, I  
understand the reason for the cancellation of school and  
sports season, so I  
completely back the decision. It was still a huge bummer for  
me because this  
was my first time having a high school head coaching role. It  
was a pretty big  
honor since I’m only 23 and I was super excited to try some  
fun new things I  
came up with for the girls. The first two weeks were already  
so much fun and  
the girls improved so much, so I can’t imagine how great the  
whole season would  
have been.”

Osawatomie-Paola-Louisburg  
had three seniors swimmers this season, including Shayla Aye  
from Louisburg and  
Brayden Hanf and Grace Shore from Paola.

In  
all, Louisburg had eight swimmers on the team including Aye,  
Claire Brown,  
Bailey Hallas, Sydney Keaton, Dana Mattison, Anna Morrison,  
Dagen Page and  
Reese Reitz.

“Everyone  
is really bummed, especially the seniors,” Carrigan said. “We  
had a lot of  
first time swimmers, as well, so I hope this doesn’t deter

them from joining  
the team again next year.”

## **SOFTBALL**

Last year was a special season for the Louisburg softball team as the Lady Cats made a run to a regional championship and a state tournament appearance.

It was a great last part of the season for several of the Lady Cats.

Unfortunately, with the news of COVID-19, this year’s version of Louisburg softball team will never get another chance at a magical season.

“When I found out my season was canceled, I was devastated,” senior Reilly Ratliff-Becher said. “It would be the last time I ever played softball and it’s just taken away from me.”

The seven Lady Cat seniors were excited to begin this season, as was their coach, Nick Chapman. Chapman was in his first year as head coach with the program after spending last season at the junior varsity level.

After a couple weeks of practices, Chapman had barely gotten a chance to get to know his new team. Then he had to deliver the news that no one wanted to hear.

“This was not easy news to get,” Chapman said. “It was even harder to have to tell the girls and even worse that I had to do it over the phone. It’s still not real. Next week, we



were going to get  
back to work and prepare for a special season. The girls had  
bought into what  
we were trying to accomplish. Just in two weeks, the culture  
was changing and  
girls were understanding what it meant to play team softball  
and do what is  
best for the team. The end of last week we had our first team  
bonding night.  
The seniors set their team expectations and goals for the  
year. I listened to  
each of them say how excited they were for this specific year  
and to make one  
last run at it.

"I was crushed to have to tell them they  
weren't going to get that chance. All seven of them helped  
mold this team into  
something special and set the tone for what Louisburg softball  
should be. I was  
excited for the product we were going to put on the field game  
one. I thought  
this year was going to be a season full of success."

The seven seniors consisted of  
Ratliff-Becher, Allie Boles, Lauren Cutshaw, Kayla Willey, Kat  
Coolidge, Gabby  
Duggar and August Daniels. Some of those seniors were a big  
part of the Lady  
Cats' state run a year ago, while others were looking to make  
an impact on the  
varsity level this year.

"I had  
very good expectations for this year," Ratliff-Becher said.  
"As much as I feel  
bad for myself, teammates and my fellow seniors, I feel  
especially bad for



Chapman. He worked so hard once he found out he got this job. I was so ready to learn and make him proud this season.

"I tell myself is that I have to think of other people in this situation. This could all be much worse. We are just containing this virus and protecting the ones at the most risk, although it's going to be hard on everyone for a while."