

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.”

Rutherford, McMullen given national recognition



Louisburg senior Madden Rutherford (left) and sophomore Rinny McMullen were both given honorable mention honors for their performance this past season.

A pair of Louisburg High School athletes were recently recognized for their athletic achievements by a couple national organizations.

Senior Madden Rutherford and sophomore Rinny McMullen were both given honorable mention awards in their respective sports for their achievements in the athletic arena.

Rutherford, who was slated to be the No. 1 starter this spring for the Wildcat baseball program, was named as a Perfect

Game/Rawlings preseason Central Region honorable mention All-American.

Although, he won't get a chance to play the spring season with the Wildcats due to COVID-19, Rutherford played a lot over the summer with Building Champions, his club team. He also played in Perfect Game/Rawlings events and saw a lot of success as a pitcher.

His success over the summer also helped Rutherford earn a spot on the Washington University (St. Louis) baseball program as he will be playing Division III baseball next season.

Rutherford was a two-time All-Frontier League performer as a member of the Wildcats and he was ecstatic to be honored among the best players in the country.

"I was happy to receive the honor, but it motivates me to work even harder," Rutherford said. "I'm super excited to hopefully play this summer in the Ban Johnson League, along with next fall and spring at WashU."

As for McMullen, the Lady Cat setter had a big season for the Louisburg volleyball team as she helped her team to a fourth-place finish at the Class 4A state tournament. With that, McMullen earned high honorable mention recognition by prepvolleyball.com for the sophomore class.

"It's always special to be honored nationally for the sport that I love," McMullen said. "I really enjoyed the role that I played last year for my high school team and I look forward to the coming season. I was happy for my nomination from my coaches and look to build on last season's success."

McMullen, who was a part of a two-setter offense with teammate Davis Guetterman, finished the year with 504 assists, 179 digs, 90 aces and 59 kills. She was also a second-team All-Frontier League and all-state player last year and was also named to the Class 4A All-State Tournament team.

Following the season, McMullen was playing with the Dynasty Volleyball Club, but their season was postponed due to the spread of COVID-19.

“Sadly, our club season ended until further notice, but we showed the promised of being a top team in the nation and hope that we get the chance to play at nationals in June,” McMullen said. “I continue to work with my teammate/friend Davis Guetterman during the off-time. I look forward to getting back on the court.”

Dixon to leave Kansas State and transfer to Missouri



In her first season at the collegiate level, Anna Dixon saw herself grow in several different areas on the volleyball court at Kansas State.

The Louisburg High School graduate shined in many matches throughout the season, earned all-conference honors for her efforts and enjoyed the comradery with her teammates. As difficult as freshman seasons are, it became even harder for Dixon after it was over.

Dixon had some tough choices to make following the 2019 campaign and made a decision that will lead her to a different destination in 2020.

On a Twitter post on New Year's Day, Dixon announced that she was transferring from Kansas State and will make the move to the University of Missouri volleyball program beginning next season.

Dixon will join a Missouri program that finished with a 22-8 record last season and made the NCAA Tournament, before falling in the second round to No. 5-ranked Nebraska in a 3-1 loss.

"Going through my second recruiting process, I knew where I belonged and that was Mizzou," Dixon said. "They have a great nursing program that works well with student athletes, an awesome new coaching staff who was very welcoming, and great connections for post-college. I'm really excited for the opportunity."

Leaving the K-State program wasn't easy one. Dixon committed to the Wildcats as a sophomore in high school after receiving several Division 1 offers and eventually signed two years later.

Dixon's freshman season began in the summer as she joined the Wildcats on a trip to Brazil and eventually earned a starting role later in the season where she played all six rotations.

"The decision to leave K-State was one of the hardest decisions I've had to make," Dixon said. "The people there will forever have a place in my heart. I was given a lot of amazing opportunities and experiences that helped me grow this

last year and I'm thankful for that."

Dixon was selected to the All-Big 12 Rookie Team in a year that saw her turn in 292 kills with a team-best 2.89 kills per set. Her 3.14 kills a set during conference play ranked seventh in the Big 12 and her overall and league kills-per-set averages were tops among Big 12 freshmen.

She

also turned in 84 digs, 47 blocks and nine aces in her first collegiate season.

Nine times she led the Wildcats in kills, including a stretch seven straight

matches and had double figure kill numbers in 12 consecutive outings. Dixon had

career high 21 kills in back-to-back outings against Oklahoma and West Virginia.

Still

with all that success, Dixon realizes there is still a lot more growth to come

and she hopes to become a better player in the years ahead.

"This

season was a huge growing experience for me," she said. "Being a young player,

I was expected to make mistakes on the court. I think my biggest growth was in

my consistency and understanding that it is okay to make mistakes and learn

from them. This is an area I can still greatly improve in and I'm hoping to get

better at with more experience.

"I was

so grateful to earn postseason honors. There are so many amazing young players

in the Big 12, so to be named apart of the All-Rookie team was

a huge honor.”

Top 10 Louisburg Sports Stories of 2019



It was a successful, and eventful, 2019 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.

Below are the Top 10 stories from 2019, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the explanation is the link to the actual story from the event.

When putting the list together, I took a lot of things into account – whether it was team vs. individual, popularity of the sport, historical achievements and the interest it drew on the web site. There were stories that I had to leave off that normally would easily make it. 2019 was that successful of a year for Wildcat athletics.

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 2020 to begin. Looking forward to it!



10. Tucker, Ratliff-Becher win powerlifting titles, Tucker breaks state record.

Two Louisburg High School weightlifters made their way to the top of the podium in March during the Class 4A State Powerlifting Meet at Basehor-Linwood High School.

Louisburg senior Kiefer Tucker and junior Reilly Ratliff-Becher both earned state championships in their respective weight class. Senior Jonathan DePriest finished third overall and several other Wildcats also earned individual medals.

Not only did Tucker win a state title in the 220-pound division, he also broke a 24-year state bench press record as he recorded a bench of 375 pounds to surpass the old mark of 365. He also won the squat competition at 505 pounds and had a total of 1,165 pounds to run away with the crown.

Tucker's total was the highest three-lift mark at the entire state meet in all weight classes.

"I had messed around with 375 and 385 before on bench, so I was confident that I could lift it if I had the chance," Tucker said. "I was more worried about my first lifts on bench at 345 and 365 because if I messed up on those attempts then I would not have had the change to even attempt 375. It was definitely a sigh of relief when I finally locked it out.

"It was a great feeling to beat the state record. To put Louisburg up on the record chart definitely brought a smile to my face."

Ratliff-Becher had a big day in the women's division as she won a state crown in the 180-pound weight class. She finished with a three-lift total of 575 pounds.



The Louisburg junior took first in bench press with 155 pounds, first in clean at 150 pounds and second in squat with a 270-pound lift.

“Winning the state title meant a lot to me,” Ratliff-Becher said. “I have put in a lot of time and

effort in weights class, so it's nice to see it has paid off. But, also because I feel as if I put out a message to girls that it's cool to be strong physically. I know that being sometimes the only girls in a class with a lot of strong guys is intimidating. Weightlifting is all about your own personal growth and seeing how far you can push yourself.

"I was honestly surprised I won because there are lots of very strong girls there and it's good competition. It's also fun to meet new people that have the same interests and motivation as you."



9. Golf qualifies for state, Dillon medals for third straight season

As the scores trickled

in to the clubhouse at Paola Country Club, the Louisburg golf team could hardly stand it.

The Wildcats were nervously waiting to hear if they had qualified for state, but they knew it was going to be close. Louisburg had to be in the top three of the team standings to earn a spot and the Wildcats had some tough competition amongst them.

As it turned out, the Wildcats had nothing to worry about.

Louisburg recorded a team score of 352 during the Class 4A regional tournament in May and finished third overall by nine strokes over fourth-place Ottawa. The Wildcat team of Calvin Dillon, Drake Varns, Garrett Rolofson, Ryan Haight, Noah Hill and Colin Cook all competed in the state tournament

Topeka-Hayden won the regional title going away with a 332 and Louisburg was just three strokes behind runner-up Tonganoxie, which had a 349.

“It feels great, especially with all the hard work we have put in the offseason and last few months,” Dillon said. “It was our goal coming in and we did it. I felt like we had a good chance. It was borderline with those four teams being as close as we are. I knew we had a chance, but it was nice to actually qualify. It was definitely a little nerve-racking waiting for the scores to come in.”

As impressive as that

feat was for the Wildcats, Dillon's performance blew away the rest of the competition.

The Louisburg junior won his first individual regional title as he carded a 1-over 73 to win the tournament by six strokes. Dillon's 73 was his best score on the season and he has now won all but one tournament on the year.

Dillon went on to record his third consecutive state medal and finished 11th overall in Dodge City after the tournament was postponed several times, and eventually moved due to weather.



8. Wildcat wrestling sends six to state, Moore earns first state medal

Back in early November of 2018, Austin Moore was in a sling with a broken collarbone and he wondered why all this was happening.

Moore suffered the injury during the regional football playoffs and he didn't get to finish his final high school season. Not only that, his hopes of getting his first state wrestling medal was in serious jeopardy.

A little more than four months later, Moore was on the medal stand with some of the state's best wrestlers in his weight class.

The Louisburg senior earned a fourth-place medal at 220 pounds during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships in February at the Tony's Pizza Events Center in Salina. It was his first high school state medal and it marked the end of a long journey for Moore.

"It was pretty special for me to get a state medal, especially because it has been a goal of mine ever since I started wrestling," Moore said. "Overall, I felt like I wrestled pretty well, but I just wish I could've ended it on a win."

The Wildcats qualified six wrestlers for state, had three regional champions and took third place in the team standings during the regional tournament in Paola – all while not being able to field a full team.

Louisburg's talent was

certainly on full display during the two-day tournament. Brandon Doles, Blue Caplinger and Austin Moore won regional crowns, Cade Holtzen was a regional runner-up, while Gabe Bonham and Ryan Owens also qualified for state by placing third and fourth, respectively.

As a team, the Wildcats ended up with 138.5 points and was just 2.5 points out of second place. Ottawa won the regional with 149.5 points and Eudora was second at 141. It was the highest regional team finish for Louisburg since 1998.

“The way these guys wrestled this weekend shows that the program has been doing so many things right this season,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “We’ve had the obstacle of low numbers, which hurt us in our duals, but when it comes to tournament time, we have a bunch of guys who are placing high and that gives us a lot of team points. Taking six to state feels pretty encouraging, and finishing third at regionals is an awesome statement for this team.

“If a few things had gone the other way, we would have been in second as a team. On paper, we weren’t supposed to be in the race for a regional plaque. Almost all of our guys stepped up and scored huge team points for us.”



7. Louisburg softball captures regional title

OTTAWA – Madison

Svoboda could feel her heart starting to come out of her chest.

Karson Griggs was a feeling a little nauseous.

Those are some of the same feelings that were flooding the Louisburg softball's team dugout during the final inning of the Class 4A regional championship game against Chanute on Tuesday in Ottawa.

Louisburg held a one run lead, but Chanute had the tying run on third, two outs, and a trip to the state tournament was on the line. On the mound was sophomore

Brooklyn

Diederich, and with two strikes, the Chanute batter fouled five straight pitches.

The tension was mounting.

Finally, on the 10th pitch of the at-bat, Diederich got what she was looking for – a swing and miss.

The strikeout sealed the Lady Cats' trip to state with a 6-5 victory over No. 7 seed Chanute and sent shockwaves throughout Class 4A softball.

"I want to cry, but at the same time I am just really happy," Griggs said. "It is exciting because I never thought something like this could happen, especially this year. It feels really nice and now maybe people will actually start taking us seriously."

Not many gave people gave the Lady Cats a chance as they entered the Class 4A regional tournament with just five wins and were forced to begin tournament action in the play-in game.

After a 17-2 win over Parsons last Monday in the play-in game, No. 15 Louisburg advanced to the regional semifinals and upset No. 2 seed Ottawa, 9-7, which helped set up the Lady Cats' first state tournament appearance since 2014.

"I think a lot of

other teams underestimated us,” Diederich said. “The fact that we came out and played our hardest ball showed what type of team we actually are. It is just crazy.”

At the state tournament in Salina a week later, the Lady Cats faced off against Andale and lost to the eventual state champion in the first round, 10-0.



6. Cross Country qualifies for state, Moore breaks school record and takes third at state

BALDWIN CITY – One by one, members of the Louisburg girls cross country team crossed the finish line and coach John Reece was unsure whether or not his team did enough

to qualify for
state.

The Lady Cats had made
school history by qualifying the last two seasons, but the
third time was a
little bit in jeopardy – that was until the results were
released.

As it turned out,
Reece didn't need to be so worried.

Louisburg finished third overall with 96 points in October at
the Class 4A regional meet at the Baldwin Golf Course, and
beat out Bishop Miege by six points to earn a spot at the
state meet this weekend in Wamego.

The team of Trinity
Moore, Carlee Gassman, Reese Johnson, Claire Brown, Ruth
Minster, Kennady
Wilkerson and Bree Gassman competed for the Lady Cats at
state.

“This group of girls runs
well, they race well and they train well together,” coach
Reece said. “They are
a good group and this is just as exciting as the other two
times. The
competition was a lot tougher than the previous two times. We
had to run our
races and we did. From our third to fifth runners was about an
eight point
spread.”

Trinity Moore has left a
lasting impression on the Louisburg cross country program over
the last four
years, but she saved the best moment for her final act.

Moore broke her own school record with a time of 19 minutes and 39 seconds to finish third overall at the Kansas Class 4A State Cross Country Championships at the Wamego Country Club a week later.

The Louisburg senior recorded the program's best ever state finish as she eclipsed her fourth-place state medal from a season ago.

"It meant so much to me to finish with such a great race for my high school career," Moore said.

"Going into the race, I didn't know how well I would finish. This race had the best competition that I have ran against all year and I think that is what really pushed me.

"When I saw my time crossing the finish line, I was ecstatic. I felt great the entire race and was able to control everything I did. Finishing third was icing on the cake. I was surprised but so incredibly happy to be able to place in such a great spot, but I also knew that this what I had worked for all year."

This made the fourth state medal for Moore in her high school career and she improved on her state finish every year. Last season, she took fourth overall and bested her state time from a year ago by more than 30 seconds.



5. Boys Soccer wins league, regional titles to earn No. 1 seed in playoffs.

For more than 70 minutes, the goals for Louisburg were hard to come by and it started to leave an eerie feeling on Halloween night.

However, the Wildcats got their treat when it was all over.

Louisburg scored two goals in the final seven minutes of the match to earn a 2-0 victory over Kansas City Christian in the Class 4-1A regional championship game Thursday. The Wildcats (16-2-1) earned their third regional title in the last four years and advanced to the state quarterfinals.

“This group is special,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “It is going to be tough when it is

all over. This group has changed our culture. They came back to what this program believes and they have bought in to what we are teaching them. They have worked so hard since June. For these seniors, this is their third title in four years and I think it is a lot of fun for them.

A school record 16 wins, a Frontier League championship and a regional title are all something worth celebrating, but following the state quarterfinal match with Bishop Miege, all Louisburg could think about was the finality of it all.

Despite all those accomplishments, the Wildcats fell one win short of their main goal – a spot in the state final four.

Louisburg saw its season come to a close with a 3-0 loss to Bishop Miege at the Wildcat Sports Complex. The Wildcats lost to the eventual state champion, as Miege went on to defeat Wichita-Trinity on Saturday, 3-1, for the Class 4-1A state championship – the Stags' fourth in a row.

As difficult as the loss was for Louisburg, there was no forgetting how big of a jump the Wildcats made from the season before as they went from a 6-win team to one that earned the East's No. 1 seed in the state playoffs.

“Going 6-11 last year and seeing this Miege team almost mercy-ruling us in the regional championship last year in the rain, was a program changer,” Louisburg coach

Kyle Conley

said. "After that was over, we talked about how things needed to change and it starts now. For our first practice in June, I told them that they are the ones that has to change them. Since day one, they have played for each other, played hard in practice and it was a total mindset change. When someone got hurt, it was the next guy up. We missed two starters for half of the year and it was always the next guy up taking advantage of his opportunity to fill in. The freshmen stepped up huge for us.

"This team is special.

16 wins is a school record and only two losses is probably a school record.

This team is incredible, played so hard and did everything I asked them to do.

They were always there to pick each other up and that is what this soccer

family is all about. It will be tough to say goodbye to these kids."



4. Volleyball knocks off Miego to win regional title, takes fourth at state

ATCHISON – The sub-state semifinal game between Louisburg and Bishop Miego had all the feels of a state tournament match.

Partially because a year ago, it was.

Louisburg met Miego in the state championship match only to see the Stags send the Lady Cats to a runner-up finish in two sets. Then three weeks ago the two teams met again, and like before, Miego dispatched of Louisburg in two sets.

However, Bishop Miego saw a different Louisburg team during the sub-state tournament at Atchison High

School – one they didn't expect.

The Lady Cats came out on fire and never let up in a 25-18 and 25-22 win over Miego to end the Stags' season. It marks the first time in at least 12 years, if not longer, that Miego will not be at the state tournament.

Since the state tournament began in 1971, Bishop Miego has made 39 state appearances during that time in either Class 5A or 4A and is the most in Kansas history.

"Our energy was going to be the difference in that match, so we knew we had to bring it," Louisburg senior Erin Lemke said. "We knew we had the same skill set as Miego, but our energy was what was going to pull us through there in the end. To get there, we just had to believe in ourselves and work hard this past week to give us the confidence that we needed."

However, even after pulling off a big revenge win that expended a lot of energy, the Lady Cats still had a sub-state championship match to play against No. 2 seed Atchison. The No. 7 seed Lady Cats took care of business as they won in straight sets, 25-12 and 25-15, at Atchison High School.

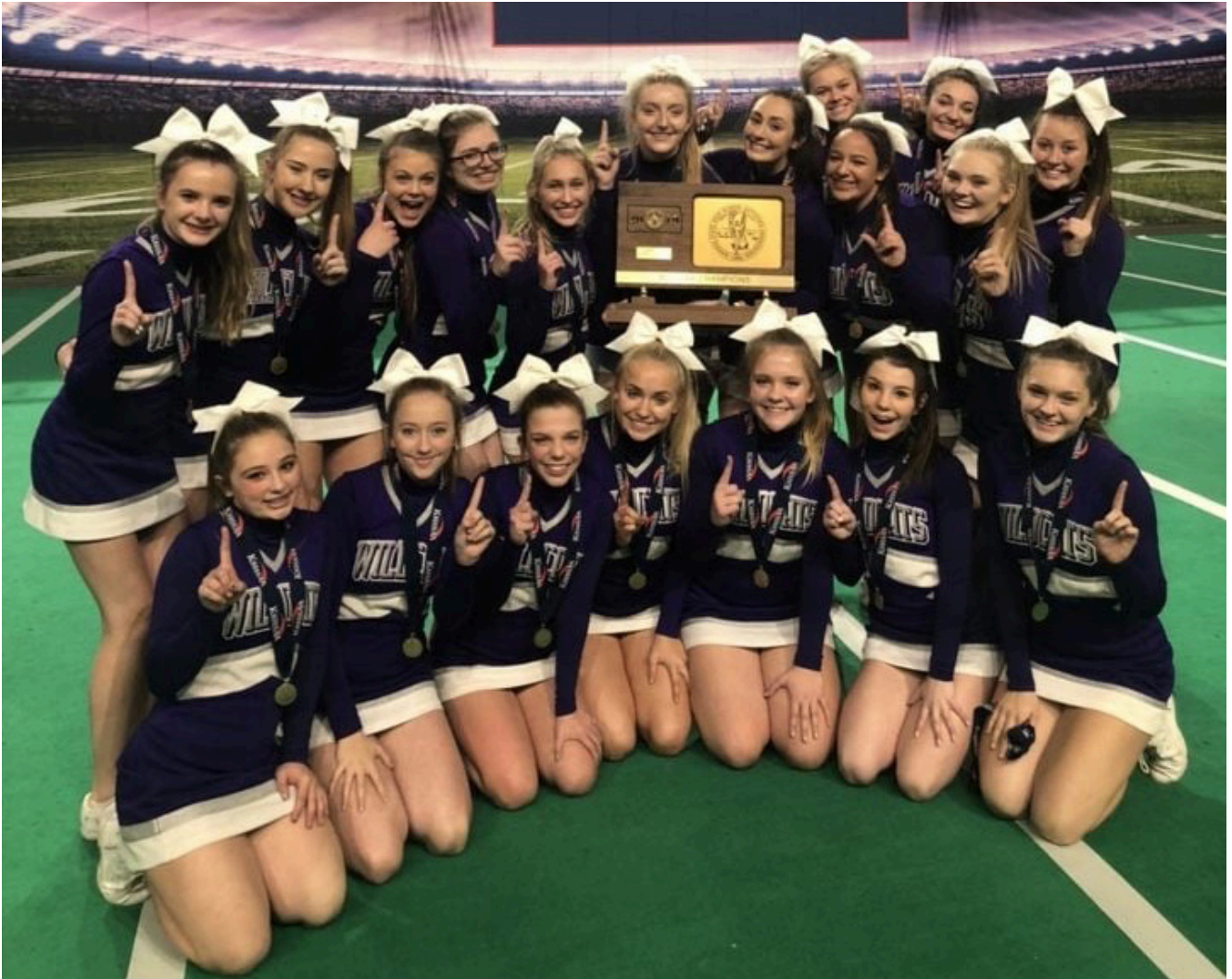
Louisburg lost its final two matches of the season, but those setbacks didn't take away from what the Lady Cats accomplished during the Kansas Class 4A State Championships.

For the third straight season, the Lady Cats were among the last four teams playing

and brought home a little hardware for their efforts. Louisburg took fourth overall after losing its third place match to Towanda-Circle, 2-1, in October at Hutchinson Sports Arena.

“Every season our goal is to put ourselves in the best position to qualify for state and then to hopefully advance to bracket play on Saturday,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “Leading up to state, we talked about how nothing is guaranteed and in order to make it to bracket play, we have to show up and play our best from the first whistle to the last whistle. If we play our game, then hopefully the winning will take care of itself and we’d advance.”

“The eight teams at state this year were all very talented. I was happy that we qualified for the semifinals because that put us one step closer to the championship. Even though we didn’t reach the championship match and finished fourth, I was still very proud of how the team played throughout the tournament.”



3. Louisburg cheer wins first state championship

The Wildcat

cheerleaders competed at the Class 4A KSHSAA Game Day Spirit Showcase

Competition on Nov. 23 at the Stormont Vail Events Center in Topeka and came back home with a big trophy in tow.

Louisburg edged out runner-up Augusta with a point total of 82.25 to 81 in the finals to secure what is just the third athletic team state title in school history.

“I was so nervous at the awards,” Louisburg senior Lauren Vincent said. “We were all holding hands and had our heads down. We thought that we would get second

place at best, most likely third. We were content because we put everything out on the mat and did the best we could. But when they called out second place and it was Augusta, we screamed, cried, and hugged each other because we knew that we had just won.

“When our name was called for first, we jumped up and hugged each other. Then I ran out onto the mat and grabbed the trophy and we held it up and jumped around victoriously. It was the best feeling in the entire world. Knowing that all of our hard work had finally paid off was indescribable feeling of joy.”

The Louisburg cheerleaders that competed are Lexi Pena, Lauren Vincent, Ashlyn McManigal, Brooklyn Mitchell, Gabby Tappan, Andrea Gaza, Eleanor Willming, Jayden Trester, Lacie Kallevig, Sammy McDaniel, Mable Graham, Anna Morrison, Bella Feikert, Audrey Anderson, Sydney Dudzik, Kaitlyn Vest, Jolie Hendrickson, Abby Bradley and Zoe Cutshaw. Louisburg’s head coach is Jayna Guerra.

Not only were the Wildcats the third team to win a state title in school history, they were also the first female squad to win a team crown as well. All the history just added to what was a special day for the program.

“It means so much to me and all my teammates,” Tappan said. “As someone who’s been a part of a variety

of sports my entire life, I know how hard each of our teams work to do their very best in whatever sport they're a part of. We are so thankful that we got to make history for Louisburg and it is something that I can guarantee that each and every one of us will remember it for the rest of our lives."



2. Girls soccer takes second at state, Conley named coach of year and Scholtz, Buffington awarded players of year.

When it was all said and done, the Louisburg girls soccer team held its trophy high in front of the Wildcat faithful and the tears were easy to spot.

After nearly 200 minutes of soccer in a nine-hour time period, including one

match that ended in penalty kicks, the Wildcats were spent. They gave everything they had.

For the second consecutive season, Louisburg earned the Class 4-3-2-1A state runner-up trophy after a wild victory over Topeka-Hayden in the semifinals and then were shutout by Bishop Miege in the championship game, 4-0. It was the third consecutive state final four appearance for Louisburg.

Frustration and sadness was easy to see following the Wildcats' loss to the defending state champion, but the team realizes what they have accomplished in just four years of existence is to be celebrated.

"Being in this situation two years in a row is something that doesn't happen very often," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "There are a bunch of teams that haven't been to a state final four and we have been to three in three years. It is pretty cool and it is special."

It was a wild 24 hours for the Wildcats. Louisburg was supposed to play Hayden on Friday in the semifinals, but severe weather forced the postponement to early Saturday morning.

The Wildcats battled Hayden through four overtimes and eventually led to penalty kicks. After an intense first five penalty kicks that left the match still tied, senior goalie

Carson Buffington recorded a big save and then senior Hallie Hutsell converted the sixth penalty kick to break the tie and give Louisburg a 2-1 win over Hayden.

“We usually play 80 minutes, but this time we had to play 110 minutes and we were gassed,” Conley said. “We were holding on and had some chances at the end to win it, but then we went to overtime and then to penalty kicks. It was all about to see if we could survive. Emotionally it was just a high for us and an unbelievable response and a great finish. Carson making a big save, Hallie putting it in for the win – it was just a great game.”

In the championship match, the Stags were just too much for the Wildcats and junior Sophia Stram provided a big spark. Stram scored all four goals for Miego in the title game, all of which came in the first half, and the Wildcats didn't have an answer.

“They are just so freaking good,” Conley said. “I think the girls were mentally ready, but I don't think their legs were quite ready, but we lost to one of best teams in the state of Kansas. They have great players, they are well-coached, but our girls played their butts off.

Coming off its second consecutive state runner-up appearance, Louisburg had some positive repercussions from its historic season.

However, none bigger came when the all-state teams were released by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association. Not only did six Wildcats earn all-state selections, but they were honored with some of the highest awards out there.

Junior Mackenzie Scholtz was named as the Co-Offensive Player of the Year in Class 4-1A with Bishop Miege's Sophia Stram after she led the Wildcats in scoring.

Louisburg was also recognized on the other side of the ball as senior Carson Buffington was named the Class 4-1A Goalkeeper of the Year.

"Seeing Mackenzie and Carson recognized for their positional player of the years was fantastic," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "They both had incredible years."

The Wildcats weren't done, as for the second consecutive season, Conley was named as the Class 4-1A Coach of the Year as he guided Louisburg to a 17-4 record. He also led the Wildcats to three consecutive final four appearances.



1.4×400 boys wins state championship, Wright wins four state medals and team breaks six school records at regional meet.

Three days after arriving in Wichita for the Kansas State Track and Field Championships, Justin Collins, Blue Caplinger, Ben Wiedenmann and Chris Williams finally got the chance to get on the Cessna Stadium track.

The four Wildcat runners had the top time in Class 4A going into the 4×400-meter relay, but weather threw a little wrench into their plans. The meet, which was supposed to end on a Saturday, was postponed to Sunday morning and all

races were judged by
times with no preliminaries.

It wasn't the ideal
situation, but they made it work – and it worked well.

Collins, Caplinger, Wiedenmann and Williams won the state
championship in a time of 3 minutes and 25.39 seconds as they
edged Chapman at the finish line, which ran a 3:25.61. It was
the first state track championship for Louisburg since 2015
when Connor McMullen won the discus.

That was just one
event in what was an historic week for Louisburg track.

Louisburg freshman Delaney Wright earned four state medals,
while junior teammate Carlee Gassman finished with three as
the Lady Cats went on to finish 10th in the team standings. The
Lady Cats earned several other medals at the state meet coming
off an impressive performance at regionals.

During the Class 4A
regional meet at Paola High School, Wright qualified for state
in four events,
broke two school records and earned a regional title in her
first postseason
track meet.



Wright won a regional title in the long jump and finished second in the 200 and 400-meter dashes. She also helped Carlee Gassman, Rain Pugh and Sydni Keagle to a second place finish in the 4x400-meter relay.

“I am so grateful for everything,” Wright said. “I had been having trouble with my hip this week and I just wanted to come out and make state in at least one event. I didn’t realize I would make it in four. It is an unbelievable feeling.”

Wright’s day was just one of the many positives for the Lady Cats as they broke four school records, had four regional

champions and qualified for state in 10 events.

As a team, the Lady Cats nearly earned the regional runner-up trophy as they racked up 86.5 points and finished a half a point behind second place Baldwin and Bishop Miege, who tied for second. Paola won the regional title with 107 points.

The Wildcat boys also broke two school records and would end up qualifying for nine spots at the state meet.

Louisburg has big presence at GKCVCA all-star match



Louisburg's Erin Lemke (left) and Haley Cain go up for a block during the Greater Kansas City Volleyball Coaches Association small-class all-star match Sunday at Avila University.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The 2019

Louisburg volleyball senior class provided a lot of memories for the program in their four years, but many of them still had one more item on their agenda.

Erin Lemke, Haley Cain, Riley

Kallevig and Reilly Ratliff-Becher all took part in the Greater Kansas City

Volleyball Coaches Association Small Class All-Star Match on

Sunday at Avila

University as the Kansas seniors squared off against Missouri.

The result may not have been what they were hoping for as Missouri won the match for the third straight season, 25-20, 25-23 and 21-25, but all four Lady Cat players saw a lot of court time as they joined players from Bishop Miege, Eudora and Heritage Christian.

“I was extremely honored to be chosen to represent Kansas,” Ratliff-Becher said. “I loved playing with the girls from different schools, but my favorite part was experiencing this with my teammates Haley, Erin and Riley. They’re my very best friends and we’ve been by each other’s side these past four years making memories. This experience was a good note to end on with them.”

The four Louisburg seniors weren’t the only local connection to the match as Louisburg head coach Jessica Compliment was named the Kansas Small-Class Coach of the Year for the fourth time in her career and coached team Kansas, along with assistants Leanna Willer and Kallie O’Keefe.

“It’s always a great honor to be recognized by my peers and selected to coach the all-star match,” Compliment said. “This is the fourth time I’ve been selected, and each year it’s humbling.

I always say though that it’s not about me, but about the players and

recognizing their outstanding senior season and careers they’ve had. It’s fun

to bring together players from opposing teams and see them work

together on the same side of the net rather than opposing sides.



Louisburg head coach Jessica Compliment was named the GKCVCA Kansas Small-Class Coach of the Year. Compliment coached the Kansas team with assistant Kallie O'Keefe (left) and Leanna Willer.

“Having the opportunity to coach the Louisburg seniors one last time is also always exciting. These seniors had a great season and have put a stamp on Louisburg volleyball. The all-star match is a no pressure match but rather an opportunity for players across the metro area to come together and do what they do best – play good volleyball.”

Kansas took an early lead in the first set thanks in part to Cain, who recorded a block to put her team up 3-0 early.

Missouri then went on a run to take a 15-10 advantage, before Cain added a kill to cut into the deficit.

Lemke made an impact late in the set on a kill, while Ratliff-Becher served a pair of points to cut Missouri's lead to 23-19, but could get no closer.

"I was very grateful that I got picked to play in the all-star match and represent Kansas," Cain said. "It is an honor I will always remember. Being able to play with, and against, people of that talent was such an amazing experience. But what I enjoyed the most was being able to play with Erin, Reilly and Riley one last time, along with getting coached by our coaches. It meant so much to me to get to take the court with all of them one last time."

In the second set, Kansas got out to another good start. Kallevig recorded a kill, Ratliff-Becher had an ace on the play and Cain added to kill to help put Kansas up 6-3.



Reilly Ratliff-Becher looks to dig up a ball Sunday during the GKCVCVA all-star match..

Lemke notched a kill to put Kansas up 11-5 and Cain later recorded an ace to give Kansas a 19-15 advantage.

Missouri made a late final run to steal the set.

Unfortunately, the night for Kallevig ended early in the second set as she had to leave with an ankle injury and was unable to come back. Despite that, she enjoyed the all-star experience.

“I was so honored to be selected to play at the all-star game this year, and having the opportunity to play with a few of my teammates again,” Kallevig said. “I had the best time getting to meet new people as well and to play alongside them representing the Kansas small class.”



Louisburg’s Riley Kallevig prepares to rise up for a block Sunday at Avila University.

It was all Kansas in the third set as it jumped out to a 17-10 after a Lemke block and it was able to end the night on a positive note.

“I was very honored to have been

selected to play as I was not expecting it at all," Lemke said. "All of us, Haley, Reilly and Riley were excited to play again, especially with each other. Getting to meet and play with girls that we had played against for so long was a really cool experience."

McMullen named to all-state team; 5 Lady Cats earn all-league honors



Louisburg sophomore Rinny McMullen was recently named to the Class 4A all-state second team by the Kansas Volleyball Association and was one of five Lady Cats to earn All-Frontier League honors.

It was another successful season for the Louisburg volleyball team, and with that success, comes a few awards.

After finishing fourth in Class 4A this past season, several Lady Cats were recognized with postseason honors – including one on the state level.

Sophomore setter Rinny McMullen earned second-team Class 4A honors when the Kansas Volleyball Association all-state teams were released over the weekend. McMullen was the youngest player to garner all-state honors, as the three teams were completed with juniors and seniors.

All-Frontier League teams were also recently released and five Lady Cats were recognized by the league's coaches.

Senior Haley Cain, junior Carleigh Pritchard and McMullen earned second-team selections, while senior Reilly Ratliff-Becher and sophomore Davis Guetterman were named honorable mentions.

Spring Hill, which won the Frontier League, had two players earn first team honors. Bonner Springs, which was the league runner-up, earned three spots. Eudora also had two first-team selections.

"The Frontier League is made up of great teams and great players," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "I was happy to see five of our players recognized."

McMullen, who is a part of a two-setter offense with Guetterman, led Louisburg with 504 assists and also led the Lady Cats with 90 aces on the season. She also added

179 digs and 59 kills to her stat line.

Cain,

who was a middle hitter for Louisburg, was third on the team with 202 kills on the season and was second with 58 blocks. She also added 27 aces on the year.

Pritchard also played in the middle for the Lady Cats and had a big year offensively. She led Louisburg with 232 kills on the year and also had a team-high 66 blocks.



Haley Cain (left) and Carleigh Pritchard both earned second team all-league honors.

“These

three players had a great season, and I was happy to see them recognized for

their play,” Compliment said. “Haley has been a leader on the court for the

past four seasons and had another great year. Rinny and Carleigh both had huge

matches throughout the season and plays that helped propel the

team forward. They are both dynamic players on the court and fun to watch. I was also proud to see Rinny earn all-state honors as well. I am very happy for her.”

Guetterman also had a big season for the Lady Cats at the setter position. She was right behind McMullen with 457 assists on the year and also had 39 aces and 141 digs.



Setter Davis Guetterman (left) and libero Reilly Ratliff-Becher were recently awarded all-league honorable mention.

Ratliff-Becher served as the team’s libero and was the leader for the Lady Cat back row. She had a team-high 359 digs to go along with 17 aces and 85 assists.

“Both Reilly and Davis are so steady and consistent on the court,” Compliment said. “Reilly has been a crucial part of our defense and stepped up this

year as one of our leaders. Davis was able to bring a lot of passion and enthusiasm to the team. I love watching her and Rinny work so well together and run the offense as well as they both do.”

ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE VOLLEYBALL

First Team

Jalyn Stevenson, Spring Hill, junior; Alli Frank, Spring Hill, junior; Keagan Shockley, Eudora, senior; Kim Whetstone, Bonner Springs, senior; Keyana Cruse, Bonner Springs, junior

Defensive Specialist/Libero:
Delaney Franklin, Eudora, senior

Setter: Mercedes Madlock, Bonner Springs, sophomore

Second Team

Kate Frakes, Spring Hill, sophomore; Haley Cain, Louisburg, senior; Carleigh Pritchard, Louisburg, junior; Molly Olmstead, Ottawa, junior; Darby Weidl, Ottawa, junior

Defensive Specialist/Libero:
Caitlyn Rexroat, Spring Hill, senior

Setter: Daphne Gardner, Spring Hill, freshman; Rinny McMullen, Louisburg, sophomore

Honorable mention

Rylee Serpan, Spring Hill,

sophomore; Jayla Pierce, Eudora, junior; Erin Gallagher, Tonganoxie, senior;
Jordan Knipp, Tonganoxie, senior; Morgan Clark, Paola, junior;
Abby Richmond,
Paola, junior; Anna Burnett, Baldwin, senior

Defensive Specialist/Libero:

Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Louisburg, senior; Abby Marcouiller, Tonganoxie, senior;
Kaylin Miller, Piper, senior; Brooklyn Chase, Baldwin, junior

Setter: Davis Guetterman,

Louisburg, sophomore; Emma Durr, Eudora, sophomore; Mikayla White, Paola,
sophomore; Emma Stottlemire, Ottawa, sophomore

Four Lady Cats selected to GKCVCA all-star match



Louisburg seniors Riley Kallevig (10), Erin Lemke (1), Reilly Ratliff-Becher (16) and Haley Cain (9) were all selected to participate in the GKCVCA all-star match this Sunday at Avila University.

Over the years, Louisburg has been no stranger when it comes to the Greater Kansas City Volleyball Coaches Association all-star match.

The contest, which pits the best senior volleyball players from Kansas against the best from Missouri, features both a small and large-class match. Once again this year, the Lady Cats will be well-represented.

Haley Cain, Riley Kallevig, Erin Lemke and Reilly Ratliff-Becher have all been selected to participate for the small-class team at 5 p.m. this Sunday at Avila University.

The four Louisburg players played big roles in the Lady Cats' fourth-place state finish this past season and have helped the Lady Cats to three straight state tournament appearances, including two runner-up finishes in 2017 and 2018.

Cain, who was a middle hitter for Louisburg, was third on the team with 202 kills on the season and was second with 58 blocks. She also added 27 aces on the year.

Kallevig played all six rotations for the Lady Cats the past two seasons and finished her year with 191 kills and 31 aces. She was also second on the team with 276 digs.

As for Lemke, the Lady Cat outside hitter overcame an injury midway through the season to record 106 kills and 27 blocks.

Ratliff-Becher served as the libero for Louisburg and was the leader in the back row. She had a team-high 359 digs and led the team in serve receive. She also finished with 17 aces and 85 assists on the season.

Lady Cats finish fourth at Class 4A state tournament



Louisburg's Alyse Moore and Reilly Ratliff-Becher celebrate a big point Friday during the Class 4A state tournament in Hutchinson.

HUTCHINSON – The Louisburg volleyball team lost its final two matches of the season, but those setbacks didn't take away from what the Lady Cats accomplished last weekend during the Kansas Class 4A State Championships.

For the third straight season, the Lady Cats were among the last four teams playing and brought home a little hardware for their efforts. Louisburg took fourth overall after losing its third place match to Towanda-Circle, 2-1, on Saturday at Hutchinson Sports Arena.

“Every season our goal is to put ourselves in the best position to qualify for state and then to hopefully advance to bracket play on Saturday,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “Leading up

to state, we talked about how nothing is guaranteed and in order to make it to bracket play on Saturday, we have to show up and play our best from the first whistle to the last whistle. If we play our game, then hopefully the winning will take care of itself and we'd advance.

"The eight teams at state this year were all very talented. I was happy that we qualified for the semifinals because that put us one step closer to the championship. Even though we didn't reach the championship match and finished fourth, I was still very proud of how the team played throughout the tournament."

It appeared Louisburg was going to bring home a third-place trophy as it jumped out to an early lead against Circle. The Lady Cats took the first set 25-19, and despite falling 21-25 in the second, they held a 20-13 lead in the third.



Carleigh Pritchard (left) and Liz Jacobs go up for a block Friday in Hutchinson.

Circle battled back to tie the match at 23-all, but junior Alyse Moore registered a kill to give Louisburg match point. Instead, Circle won the last three points and took third place from Louisburg.

Moore and senior Haley Cain led Louisburg with eight kills each, while junior Carleigh Pritchard had six. Louisburg also served well as it recorded 13 aces in the match, including five from sophomore Rinny McMullen.

McMullen also shined defensively as she had a team-high 15 digs to go along with 18 assists. The Louisburg setter went

on to be named to the All-Tournament Team.

Pritchard led the Lady Cat defense at the net with four blocks, while senior Riley Kallevig and sophomore Chase Kallevig each had nine digs in the loss.

“We made some errors at the end of the third set that allowed Circle to gain some momentum and win,” Compliment said. “It does go to show that you can’t take any rally or play off because a good team will capitalize on those mistakes or ‘off’ rallies.

“I was still proud of how we finished our season. Placing fourth at state is still a great accomplishment. We talked as a team afterwards about the tradition of Louisburg volleyball and how they helped to create another great season. These players are great role models and have shown once again what can be accomplished with hard work and teamwork.”



Sophomore Rinny McMullen goes up for a jump serve Friday. McMullen was later named to the state's all-tournament team.

On Friday, the Lady Cats were forced to battle their way through pool play. Louisburg opened with a 25-10 and 25-19 loss to No. 1 seed Andale.

The Lady Cats were able to keep their hopes of a state title alive with a 26-24, 23-25 and 25-20 win over Holton to even their record at 1-1 in pool play.

Seniors Liz Jacobs and Riley Kallevig led the way for the Lady Cats offensively as they had 13 and 11

kills,
respectively, while Moore was third on the team with six.
Sophomore setter
Davis Guetterman ran the offense with a team-high 22 assists
and McMullen had
13.

Defensively, Riley Kallevig led Louisburg
with 16 digs, while senior Reilly Ratliff-Becher had 12 and
Chase Kallevig
finished with 11.

Louisburg (23-18) faced an even tougher
test against No. 5 Nickerson as it lost the first set 19-25,
but rallied to
take the next two, 25-10 and 25-20, to earn a spot in the
state semifinals.

Riley Kallevig had eight kills to pace
the Lady Cat offense, while senior Erin Lemke, Cain and Moore
each finished
with five. McMullen and Chase Kallevig added four and two
aces, respectively.



Senior Sydni Keagle leaps in the air to celebrate a point Friday against Nickerson.

Ratliff-Becher had a big match in the back row for Louisburg as the senior libero led the way with 12 digs, while Riley Kallevig added seven.

“There were many times they could have given up on Friday during the Holton and Nickerson matches,” Compliment said. “Instead, they fought through and pulled out two wins to end pool play 2-1 and lock in our place in the semifinals. Every team we played at the state tournament showed up to play, which is the way it should be. We had some difficult times on Friday, but the team persevered.”

That set up a match with Topeka-Hayden in the semifinals on Saturday, and the Lady Cats couldn't get into a rhythm in their 25-14 and 25-18 loss to the eventual state champion.

The tournament also marked the end of the high school volleyball careers of six seniors as Haley Cain, Liz Jacobs, Riley Kallevig, Sydni Keagle, Erin Lemke and Reilly Ratliff-Becher all played their final match for the Lady Cats.



Senior Erin Lemke goes up for a kill Friday against Nickerson.

“These players are great role models and have shown once again what can be accomplished with hard work and teamwork,”

Compliment said. “The seniors have been a part of three state appearances and

three finishes in the top four. That is pretty cool.

“The seniors, and the rest of the players, weren’t ready for the season to be over. The season was a bit of a roller coaster, but I think they learned a lot throughout the season and grew as a team. These six seniors will be missed. They have been great role models over the past four years and I’m excited to see what their futures outside of Louisburg High School has in store for them.”

Lady Cats hope experience puts them over the top at state tourney



Louisburg senior Erin Lemke (left) and junior Carleigh Pritchard go up for a block during last Saturday’s sub-state tournament. The Lady Cats begin state tournament play at 4:30 p.m. today in Hutchinson.

For the last two years, the Louisburg volleyball team has found itself in the last match of the season.

It is a pretty good place to be, and for some programs, it would be monumental to reach the state championship game in back-to-back years. The Lady Cats were proud of what they accomplished, but finishing second both times has left them wanting more.

“We all are tired of talking about taking second because this and that happens,” Louisburg senior Reilly Ratliff-Becher said. “I’ve been saying third time is the charm and I think this is our year.”

Louisburg will soon find out as it begins its journey toward a state title today at the Class 4A state tournament in Hutchinson. The Lady Cats will open with pool play at 4:30 p.m. this afternoon and will face off against No. 1 Andale, No. 4 Holton and No. 5 Nickerson.

The top two teams in each pool will advance to the semifinals at 1 p.m. on Saturday at Hutchinson Sports Arena, on the campus of Hutchinson Community College.

The Lady Cats, who are the No. 8 seed with a 21-15 record, will open against Andale, which has been ranked the No. 1 team in Class 4A for most of the season. Louisburg defeated Andale in the state semifinals a year ago, so the Lady Cats are somewhat familiar with their first opponent.

“I am excited to see them again,” Louisburg senior Erin Lemke said of Andale. “Every team is different this year, and I think it is exciting for us to see them again after playing them last year. Them being No. 1 most of the year is not a fear of ours, and I think we are more excited than anything. When we play together, and for each other, is when we play our best.”

Louisburg will also see a pair of unfamiliar foes in Holton and Nickerson, but the Lady Cats aren’t as worried about their

opponents as much as they are about themselves.

“We will play whoever we get paired up against,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “It was the same thing we told the girls getting ready for sub-state, that regardless who is on the other side, no one else can control what we do on our side of the court. If we take care of our business, and keep our energy level high, then no one can stop us. If we leave it all out on the court, it doesn’t matter who is on the other side.”

The Lady Cats took care of business this past week as they knocked out perennial state tournament participant, Bishop Miege, in the first round of sub-state.

Louisburg brought its energy level up and it translated into one of its better matches of the season. The Lady Cats hope to use that same recipe this weekend in Hutchinson as they try to earn the school’s first state volleyball championship.

“This week, coach said this is the most energy a team has played with during practice since she has been here,” Ratliff-Becher said. “Since I’ve been here, I think we are the most prepared than we have ever been and every single player is ready to do their job.

“I think if we come out with the same energy that we did last week, we are going to win every single game. I told my teammates that we are winning every single game, no matter how sloppy or awful it looks.”

Experience will certainly be on Louisburg’s side as the Lady Cats have six seniors on their roster, and many of

them will participate in their third state tournament. They have several players back who saw state action last season, including seniors Haley Cain, Lemke, Ratlff-Becher and Kallevig.

Junior middle blocker Carleigh Pritchard, along with sophomore setters Rinny McMullen and Davis Guetterman, also played big roles on last season's state tournament team. All of the players realize what they are going to have to do to reach their goal.

"We all know what it takes to win to get to state, and once we get there, we know what it is like playing with those teams," senior Riley Kallevig said. "Hopefully we can all play our game, everyone will do their part and we can have a good weekend.

"Being able to get second is a good accomplishment, but twice in a row is kind of tough. I think we are ready to bring home that first state title. It would be amazing."

If anything, the Lady Cats will try to use those back-to-back state runner-up finishes as a reminder of what they have missed out on heading into this weekend.

"For a few of them, they have their two second place medals and I think that is added motivation for them to go down there and win a state title," Compliment said. "A lot of people would be happy in getting second at state last year, but I think after it was over, there was a lot unfinished business left there with some of these seniors. They

know this is their last chance to get that title for those seniors. We have to take care of business first on Friday, but they definitely have a little motivation after the last couple of years.”

After their match with Andale, the Lady Cats will face off with Holton (30-11) at 5:30 p.m. and Nickerson (27-13) at 7:30 p.m.

No. 2 Independence (35-3), No. 3 Towanda-Circle (33-6), No. 6 Eudora (26-13) and No. 7 Topeka-Hayden (25-14) will compete in the other pool.

Lady Cats knock off Miego en route to sub-state championship



Louisburg senior Haley Cain holds up the Class 4A sub-state championship trophy and celebrates with her teammates following the Lady Cats' 2-0 win over Atchison in the championship match Saturday at Atchison High School. Louisburg also upset Bishop Miego in the sub-state semifinal match, 2-0.

ATCHISON – The sub-state semifinal game between Louisburg and Bishop Miege on Saturday had all the feels of a state tournament match.

Partially because a year ago, it was.

Louisburg met Miege in the state championship match only to see the Stags send the Lady Cats to a runner-up finish in two sets. Then three weeks ago the two teams met again, and like before, Miege dispatched of Louisburg in two sets.

However, Bishop Miege saw a different Louisburg team during the sub-state tournament at Atchison High School – one they didn't expect.

The Lady Cats came out on fire and never let up in a 25-18 and 25-22 win over Miege to end the Stags' season. It marks the first time in at least 12 years, if not longer, that Miege will not be at the state tournament.

Since the state tournament began in 1971, Bishop Miege has made 39 state appearances during that time in either Class 5A or 4A and is the most in Kansas history.

"Our energy was going to be the difference in that match, so we knew we had to bring it," Louisburg senior Erin Lemke said. "We knew we had the same skill set as Miege, but our energy was what was going to pull us through there in the end. To get there, we just had to believe in ourselves and work hard this past week to give us the confidence that we needed."

However, even after pulling off a big revenge win that expended a lot of energy, the Lady Cats still had a sub-state championship match to play against No. 2 seed Atchison. The No. 7 seed Lady Cats took care of business as they won in straight sets, 25-12 and 25-15, at Atchison High School.

This will be the eighth time in 10 years that Louisburg has qualified for the state tournament, including three straight appearances. The Lady Cats have also finished second at state the last two seasons.

“I am super excited,” Louisburg senior Reilly Ratliff-Becher said. “We have worked so hard this past week in practice, especially coming off a bad tournament the week before. Our mentality changed and that was big for us.”



Sophomore setter Rinny McMullen sends the ball to the back corner for a point Saturday in Atchison.

Louisburg (21-15) came out with a purpose to open the tournament and put Bishop Miege in a hole early as the Lady Cats jumped out to a 14-5 lead in the first behind kills from junior Carleigh Pritchard, seniors Liz Jacobs, Lemke and junior Alyse Moore. Senior Haley Cain also provided two blocks during that span and the Lady Cats were off and running.

The Lady Cats went up 22-12 after sophomore setter Rinny McMullen sent the ball to the back corner for a point away from the Miege defense and they were able to close out

the set.

“They were amped up and ready to play Miego,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “I think with all the talk with private schools against public schools, I think the girls just said enough is enough and we are going to do this. They realized it is just a name on the jersey and that they can beat them.”

In the second set, the two teams were tied at 10-all before the Lady Cats went on a 7-0 run as McMullen served six straight points, including three aces, to put Louisburg up 17-10.

Miego cut the Lady Cat lead to 21-18 late, but kills from Pritchard and Lemke closed out the 25-22 victory and put them in the sub-state championship.



Louisburg head coach Jessica Compliment talks to her team during a timeout Saturday.

"I don't think Miego expected us to come out this way," Compliment said. "They saw us three weeks ago at the Ottawa tournament and went on an 11-0 run on us. I think our energy, our aggressive offense and our defense really was the difference. We had some amazing blocks up front and I think all our girls played great and I don't think Miego was expecting that."

"They are a good team and you have to respect good teams and the tradition they have. Both programs have that tradition of making it to state and doing well there and this

was a rematch of the state finals and it is odd that it is in the first round of sub-state. Now one of those teams that usually goes to state isn't going to be there and I told the girls that we don't want it to be us."

The Lady Cats had a balanced attack offensively as Pritchard, Jacobs and Lemke each had five kills to lead the way, while senior Riley Kallevig added four. McMullen also finished with a team-high four aces and had nine assists along with fellow setter Davis Guetterman.

Louisburg also stepped up on defense as Lemke, Pritchard, Cain and Kallevig each had a pair of blocks in the win. Kallevig also finished with a team-high eight digs, while Ratliff-Becher and McMullen both had five.

"I wasn't surprised because this summer we did amazing things like that and that is how it felt out there on the court," Cain said of the Miego win. "It seemed like we had been missing something lately and I think we brought it out for sub-state.

"I think we played amazing. We were all consistent and played so well and beating Miego is one of the best feelings I've had."

Louisburg finished the first match on a high, but the Lady Cats had to keep that momentum going against Atchison in the championship game.

McMullen helped the Lady Cats jump out to a 6-1 lead over Atchison in the first set thanks to three aces and they held the advantage throughout the set. Louisburg finished the first set on a 7-2 run thanks to a pair of kills from Moore and an ace from Chase Kallevig.



(From left), Riley Kallevig, Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Haley Cain and Liz Jacobs celebrate a big point during the Lady Cats' win over Bishop Miege.

The Lady Cats picked up right where they left off in the second set as they opened on an 11-5 run after two aces from Chase Kallevig and kills from Moore, Riley Kallevig, Pritchard and Cain. Louisburg then took a 21-9 lead after a pair of kills from Cain and never looked back.

“When we play for each other is when we have our best outcome,” Lemke said. “We had to have same mentality that we had against Miego. We knew the skill level wasn’t exactly the same, but we knew we had to play the same way and we are able to go to state.”

Cain led the Lady Cats with eight kills in the championship match, while Moore finished with five and Pritchard added four. McMullen set up some of those kills with 10 assists and Guetterman added seven.

Serving was a strength for Louisburg as it recorded 10 aces, four of which came from Chase Kallevig.

McMullen recorded three aces and Ratliff-Becher had two.

Defensively, Ratliff-Becher had six digs to lead the Lady Cats and Riley Kallevig had five.



Sophomore Davis Guetterman sets up junior teammate Carleigh Pritchard for a kill Saturday in Atchison.

“Every year going to state is our goal, but every year you know that you can’t take anything for granted and you can’t expect that trip to state to happen,” Compliment said. “Kudos to the girls because every year they have made the time in the offseason, they have come in during the summer and they have worked hard. We had kind of an up and down year, and I think some people thought that we weren’t going to be as good this season.

“It says so much for the girls this year and I told them that they are capable of doing this

but they had to believe in themselves, put in the work and become a team. This whole season we have been struggling to find who the go-to person was going to be, and Anna (Dixon) was that person for us for the longest time, and I am proud of how they stepped up to play.”

Louisburg will now prepare for the Class 4A state tournament which begins Friday afternoon at Hutchinson Community College. The Lady Cats are the No. 8 seed and will open pool play at 4:30 p.m. against No. 1 Andale (35-2), and then follow up with matches against No. 4 Holton (24-11) and No. 5 Nickerson (27-13).



Members of the Louisburg sub-state championship volleyball team are (front row, from left) Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Sydni Keagle, Riley Kallevig, Haley Cain, Erin Lemke, Liz Jacobs;

(back row) assistant coach Kallie O'Keefe, head coach Jessica Compliment, Madi Quinn, Chase Kallevig, Carleigh Pritchard, Davis Guetterman, Rinny McMullen, Alyse Moore and assistant coach Leanna Willer.

No. 2 Independence (35-3), No. 3 Towanda-Circle (33-6), No. 6 Eudora (26-13) and No. 7 Topeka-Hayden (25-14) are in the other pool. The top two teams from each pool will qualify for the semifinals on Saturday.

After two runner-up finishes in as many years, the Lady Cats are ready to take that next step to the school's first state championship.

"Our mindset is to definitely go out there and win state," Ratliff-Becher said. "We have come up short the last two years and now it is time to win."