In Good Hands: Louisburg setters ready for one final run together



Louisburg seniors Corinna McMullen (left) and Davis Guetterman have started since their freshman year as setters and are excited for their last season together.

Throughout time, there have been hundreds of famous dynamic duos that people remember fondly.

Whether it was Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, Spongebob and Patrick, Batman and Robin or even macaroni and cheese and peanut butter and jelly – one was never quite the same without the other.

Louisburg volleyball has its own memorable duo in Rinny and Davis. Members of the team or its fans can't talk about one without thinking of the other.

They are two peas in a pod, as they say.

Seniors Corinna McMullen and Davis Guetterman have been what has made the Lady Cats go the last four years as they return for their final season as the Louisburg setters.

"There are times in most of our lives where we wish we could make like six clones of ourselves," McMullen said. "I feel like Davis and I are clones of each other. We always know what the other one is thinking. We are literally the same person

and I think it is effective in every aspect on and off the court.”

Most teams, especially in Class 4A, are lucky enough to have one experienced setter – but the Lady Cats have been blessed with two.



Both were thrown into the starting lineup their freshman year and Louisburg has run a 6-2 offense ever since.

“I think it makes it easier on the players since we have been running the program for four years and they haven’t had to adjust to a new setter,” Guetterman said. “It is almost as important as the quarterback in football. We both run the same tempo stuff and it is easy to stay in the same system.

“It is easier for most coaches to trust just one person for the job, rather than splitting it into two people and saying you have to do the same job. But I think Rinny and I both work really well together.”

It has shown on the court as the two setters have helped the Lady Cats to a second-place state finish as freshmen and a fourth-place finish as sophomores. Louisburg was on track to make it to another state tournament in 2020, but the Lady Cats ran into Bishop Miege, the eventual state champion, in sub-state and lost a very competitive match.

That continuity is what the Lady Cats hope will help them get to their third state tournament in the last four years.

“It is very difficult to find two setters who can play at the varsity level and deliver the same ball to all of the hitters – their consistency is almost unreal,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “It’s even more rare to have two setters that are also some of the best hitters and passers on the team. Considering they have been running a varsity 6-2 their entire high school careers (aside from a few injuries), it’s incredible that they have both continued to elevate their play and push each other to be better while still working together the whole time.

“They are constantly cheering each other on and pushing each other. You don’t see competition between the two of them because they choose to compete as a unit, and I think that’s what I’m proudest of as a coach. They don’t worry about comparing their stats. They just go out there to win games and will settle for nothing less.”



As if setting wasn't stressful enough, both players have also been asked to hit as they play all six rotations.

McMullen, who earned first-team all-league honors as a setter, finished last year with a team-high 207 kills and 439 assists – which is a rarity for one player to lead their team in both categories.

"It was a growing opportunity for both of us," McMullen said. "We had never been put in a role where we were expected to do great things. It is was just super exciting and pushed us out of our comfort zone and it made us grow a lot more of players."

Injuries hampered part of Guetterman's season a year ago, which didn't allow her to hit as much and hurt her chances at postseason honors, despite accounting for 35 aces, 226 assists and 102 digs. The team wasn't quite the same during that

stretch.

“Rinny and I play the best when we are on the court together,” Guetterman said. “Last year, we both hit and set and then I got injured. I did more just setting after that, we just always know what the other one is thinking. That helps a lot, especially since we are hitting now and we both know where the other wants the ball.”

It is the type of psychic intuition that has helped them be successful and they have seen themselves grow since their freshman season.



Davis Guetterman sets a teammate up for a kill during a match last season.

“Now we are more leaders,” Guetterman said. “As a freshman, I just didn’t want to mess up. We were playing with Anna (Dixon), who is a Division 1 athlete (University of Missouri),

and I just didn’t want to make mistakes. Before we just didn’t want to mess up and now we both expect certain things out of our hitters.”

As important as the two are on the court, they also do a lot of things off the court that led them to both be selected captains for the upcoming season.

Not only do they encourage each other, they also bring energy to the team, which is vital part to their 2021 season.

“We expect everyone to give 100 percent,” McMullen said. “We picked a sport where it is about more than just your individual self. This is about the person next to you and the 10 people on your team. It is about family, and I think when we understand that, we are going to come together so well.”



Louisburg senior Corinna McMullen led the Lady Cats in both kills and assists last season.

With it being their final high school season, both players

have put in everything they can to make this year a memorable one.

“As a freshman, you can’t really help those around you, because you feel like a tiny person,” Guetterman said. “As a senior, I feel like we can more motivate more people. It is kind of sad because it has gone by super fast. I told Willer at our meeting at the beginning of the season that I don’t want to waste any more time. Three years has flown by. I want her to hold us accountable. It stinks in the moment where you are having to run that extra lap or whatever, but that is what is going to make you better in the long run.”

However, volleyball will be far from their rear view mirror when the season is over. Earlier this year, McMullen committed to play at Washburn University, while Guetterman committed to the University of Sioux Falls – both Division II programs.

It has been long journey that both have enjoyed being a part of, together.

“I think it is a gift from God that my best friend and I play on the same team in both club and high school now,” McMullen said. “We grew up together through it all. It is unique that we are both at the same school and have the same qualities. We want the team to be successful as we can and we start with the basics with each other. Our connections is what drives the team to be greater.”

Greatness has been synonymous with Rinny and Davis and they hope to end their run with a state trophy.

“They have made it very clear that they expect to be back at the state tournament at the end of October, holding a plaque when it’s all said and done,” Willer said. “I think they are aware that we have a special group this year and we are going to have the opportunity to make some noise at the state level if we continue to work hard and play as one unit.”

No matter what happens though, both players are ready for whatever the season, and future, holds in store.

“Our slogan this year is ‘The Tradition Continues’ and just because of the setback we had with COVID and the changing of coaches, the tradition is still going to continue no matter who graduates or who is going to come up,” McMullen said. “Since both of us have the opportunity to play for four more years in college, it isn’t as upsetting to me. I love high school, but we have a lot to look forward to. This is the beginning to the end, to another beginning.”

OPINION: Wildcat success provides getaway from ‘real world’ problems



There hasn’t been a whole lot of good to talk about in the last year or so.

Our life has changed around us. We are having to deal with a new normal and there are a lot uncertainties as to what our future holds.

It is an unnerving time for a lot of people and our country seems more divided than ever. Still, to get by in this difficult time, you have to look for positives.

For me, the last school year brought me some of the best moments in my journalistic life. The 2020-21 school was arguably one of the most successful seasons in Louisburg High School history from top to bottom, and I was more than grateful to be there for it all.



Just look at what was accomplished last year:

- Boys cross country qualified for state for the first time in school history.
- Girls cross country placed at state for the first time in its history as they took third in Class 4A. Maddy Rhamy, Lola Edwards and Reese Johnson also earned medals.
- Boys soccer had its best finish in school history with a 3rd place state finish.

- Boys basketball advanced to the state championship game for the first time and took second.
- Girls basketball advanced to the state tournament for the first time in 47 years and recorded its best finish in third.
- Wrestlers Alec Younggren and Cade Holtzen took second and third, respectively, at the state tournament.
- Boys golf qualified for state as a team.



- Girls soccer made an improbable run to advance to its fourth straight state final four and the Wildcats took fourth.
- Delaney Wright won three state track titles in the long jump, 200 dash and 400 dash and broke all three school

records in the process.

- Maybe perhaps the best accomplishment of all, the Louisburg boys track and field team won the Class 4A state championship as they edged out Andale for the title.

Just a year removed from losing their spring season due to COVID-19, the Wildcats came back stronger than ever and it showed. It was an exciting time to be a Louisburg sports fan.

However, with so much positivity from last season, it is time to turn the page and focus on what the 21-22 season has in store.



First day of fall practice begins this Monday and the football, volleyball, cross country and boys soccer team all have a chance to do some special things this season. I am

fortunate I will be able to be there once again to cover it all.

As I talked about earlier, there is a lot of negativity going on in the world right now, but I am more than thankful to have a job where I can get away from all that and cover all the special moments.

Last season was a much-needed get away for me and it was an unbelievable journey to see all the Wildcat history that was made.

This year has another chance to be a special one. There is no way to predict what will happen, but I do know there is a chance for even more history and records to fall this upcoming year.

Football numbers are up and the Wildcats are poised for a big season, while the cross country, volleyball and boys soccer team all return several key pieces to make a run in the postseason – and that is just what the fall will hold.

The seasons can't get here soon enough and I am ready to cover it all once again. Hope to see you all out there supporting the Wildcats and maybe you can forget all those stresses in life – even if it is just for a few moments.

Willer excited for opportunity to lead Louisburg volleyball



Leanna Willer is in her first year as head coach of the Louisburg volleyball program, as she takes over for former head coach Jessica Compliment, who spent 15 years leading the Lady Cats.

Louisburg High School volleyball has always had a proud tradition.

The Lady Cats have become a regular fixture at the state tournament since the program's inception and expectations are high every year.

It was that way under head coach Jessica Compliment as she guided Louisburg to eight state tournament appearances and placed in the top four in seven of them in her 15 years at the helm.

Now it is Leanna Willer's turn to create her own mark on the program. Willer was hired to replace Compliment, who stepped down last spring, and has nearly completed her first summer with her new team.

"It means the world to me to be able to take over a program with such a rich history of success," Willer said. "Louisburg has been a volleyball powerhouse with a tradition of winning that we aim to keep moving forward. I recognize that I have some very big shoes to fill, but having Coach Compliment's support is helping to make this a smooth transition. I am beyond excited for my first head coaching job."

Willer is a graduate of Washburn University where she was one of the top players during her time with the program. She is the individual career leader in attempts (4,980), second in

kills (1,666) and third in kills per set (3.62) and overall points scored (1,870.5).

She also earned All-MIAA honors all four years and was a 2-time unanimous selection. She twice earned Academic All-American honors, was a two-time All-American and was the team MVP on two different occasions.

“I have such a love for the game of volleyball and I can’t wait to share that with the whole program,” Willer said. “I feel very fortunate to have a lot of experience as a volleyball player and as an assistant coach (in volleyball and other sports) that I can take on this role at my age. I am sure that there will be bumps along the way, but I know that I am prepared to rise to the challenge.”

Willer has spent the last four seasons as the junior varsity coach under Compliment and learned a lot during that time.

Unlike some new head coaches, Willer will already have the advantage of knowing the players, which she hopes will make for a smoother transition.

“I know the traditions and experiences these girls have had throughout high school, so it’s nice that we can dive right into the game this summer already knowing a lot of each other’s tendencies as players and as a coach,” she said. “We won’t have to spend as much time getting to know each other as I would if I began coaching at another school. Naturally, we’ll have to make some adjustments as we get used to our new roles, but I think we are all excited to continue right where we left off.”

She will also benefit from a five-member seniors class. Setters Rinny McMullen, Davis Guetterman and a defensive specialist in Chase Kallevig are returning senior starters that will help lead the way in Willer’s first season.

“I’m also very excited about the senior leadership we’ll have

this year," Willer said. "I know I'll be able to rely on them throughout my first year as a head coach. I met with them separately, and they've shared some awesome ideas. This will be their team and I'm impressed with the ownership they're taking already. Their commitment and dedication to Louisburg volleyball will not go unnoticed."

As far any changes within in the program, Willer believes it would unnecessary to change things up much, but there might be a few minor differences than what some are used to seeing.

"With the amount of success we've experienced, it seems silly to reinvent the wheel and change things up a bunch," she said. "However, people will see little changes here and there as Coach Compliment and I are different people with different personalities and coaching styles. Though I would love to sit here and say I have it all figured out, this will be a continuous learning process for me as well and I will constantly be learning, reflecting, and developing as a coach.

"I am so grateful for the opportunity to be the head coach of this program. The overwhelming support from the players, the school, and the community has me itching to get back out there on the court so we can show everyone what we're made of."

Alyse Moore named 2021 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year



Success has seemed to follow Alyse Moore wherever she goes.

It isn’t by chance, however – Moore has made her own luck.

Whether it was helping the Louisburg girls basketball team to its best finish in school history, eclipsing the 500 rebound plateau or earning a state medal and breaking the school record in the javelin, Moore had a big year for Wildcat athletics.

Those were just some of the reasons Moore was named the 2021 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year.

“It means everything to me to be honored as the Female Athlete of the Year,” Moore said. “I am super thankful to have gotten the opportunity to be an athlete at Louisburg and it is great to be able to be rewarded for that.”

Moore began the school year as the starting outside hitter for the Louisburg volleyball team and ended as an honorable mention All-Frontier League player.

She was second on the Lady Cats with 174 kills and also played well on defense as she was second on the team with 195 digs. She also had 19 aces.



“Alyse is an extremely hard worker and was a joy to coach for four years,” former Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment said. “Her hard work and leadership paid off as a multi-sport athlete, and I enjoyed seeing her excel in each sport. She had a way of bringing out the best in her teammates and pushed herself and her teammates to be the best they could be. Alyse is very deserving of this award, and I am very happy for her.”

On the basketball court, Moore made an even bigger impact as she helped the Lady Cats to a third place finish at the Class 4A state tournament, which the program’s best finish in school history. It was also the first state appearance for the program in 47 years.

Along with eclipsing the 500 career rebound mark, Moore was also an honorable mention all-league player. She led Louisburg

in rebounding with 8.6 boards a game to go along with 7.3 points and 1.7 steals.

She also earned honorable mention all-state honors from Sports in Kansas and the Wichita Eagle.

“Alyse is very talented in several different sports, but I feel Alyse is deserving because of her hard work and effort,” Louisburg basketball coach Adrianne Lane said. “No matter what season, Alyse would work hard and contribute to her team. It was an honor coaching Alyse in basketball. She would do whatever the team needed to win and she set a great example for everyone with her effort in practice and her positive attitude.”



It was that tournament run that stuck out to Moore the most and it was a time she will never forget.

“I would have to say my all time favorite memory from this year was the Labette County game that brought us to Salina,” Moore said of the team’s state quarterfinal win. “I have never played in such a loud and fun environment and I am so lucky to have been able to have that experience and get to be in the final four with all of my best friends. I will remember that moment for the rest of my life.”

That success continued over to the javelin as Moore recorded her state straight state medal in the event as she finished fourth. In the process, Moore also broke a 20-year-old school record with a throw of 149 feet.

Next season, Moore will throw for the University of Kansas track and field team as she continues to try and improve in an event she just started trying three years ago.

“Alyse is an amazing student-athlete,” Louisburg girls track coach John Reece said. “She has a great work ethic and that carries over into competition and her leadership as a teammate. She was always willing to put in the extra time needed to make herself even better. This showed with her breaking a longtime javelin record and competing on the big stage at the state meet.

“Since having her in the classroom to now, she has held a high standard for herself and has achieved great things. She will be an asset at the next level and I expect to read about her doing great things in the future.”



Moore also made a little more history following the team's state tournament run in basketball. She became the first female athlete in school history to participate in four different state athletic events.

As as sophomore in 2019, she went to state in both softball and track. Moore has also placed at the state tournament with both the volleyball and basketball teams.

"To be able to be the first female athlete in school history to participate in the state tournament in four different sports is honestly a dream come true," Moore said. "It is an amazing opportunity to be able to compete at the state tournament even once, and to be able to do that in four different sports makes me beyond proud. I couldn't have done it without my coaches and my teammates and I can't thank them enough."

Playing in multiple sports has taught Moore different things when it came to competing and other aspects of team sports. It was a memorable four years for the recent Louisburg grad.

“Each sport is slightly different in their own way, but I love each and every one of them and I still have a tough time deciding which one was my favorite,” Moore said. “I loved the crazy celebrations on the court in volleyball. I loved the bond that you create with your teammates in basketball, and I loved the reflection of hard work and technique in track. I enjoyed each sport so much.

“I am so thankful for my time at LHS and for all of my amazing coaches and teammates. I also would like to thank my parents for motivating me every day to work hard and be a good person while doing so. I am going to miss being able to play sports in front of such a supportive community and with unbelievably great people.”

2021 Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Year nominees



For the past five years, Louisburg Sports Zone has given out Athlete of the Week awards during each of the three sports seasons. I do it to recognize special athletic achievements and to highlight the athletes.

For the fourth straight year, Louisburg Sports Zone will be handing out an Athlete of the Year honor to a male and female athlete at Louisburg High School. I wanted the opportunity to recognize those who exemplify what it means to be an “athlete.”

Although I am giving out the award, I wanted the process to be subjective, so I asked the head coaches at LHS to help me out. I asked each coach to send me nominations of who they thought exemplified the Athlete of the Year honor. They will then vote for their top 3 male and female athletes and then I will tabulate the results and determine the winner. The winner will be announced later this month.

Below are the nominees for this year’s award in alphabetical order by last name. Congrats to all those who were nominated and best of luck!

ATHLETES OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

FEMALE



Reese Johnson – Junior – Cross Country, Soccer

Junior Reese Johnson made history in a couple different sports for Louisburg this past season.

In the fall, Johnson played a big role on the girls cross country team. The Lady Cats finished third in Class 4A, as that was the first time a team had placed at state in girls cross country. Johnson also medaled 15th individually and was one of three Lady Cats to earn state medals that day.

In the spring, Johnson was one of the leaders on the girls soccer team that advanced to the Class 4-1A state final four this past season. Johnson earned second team All-Frontier League honors after she finished the season with seven goals and nine assists as the Wildcats finished fourth at state.



Alyse Moore – Senior – Volleyball, Basketball, Track

Alyse Moore ended her senior season as one of the most accomplished athletes in Louisburg High School history. Moore is the first female athlete in school history to compete at the state level in four different sports, including both softball and track in the same season in 2019.

In the spring, Moore earned her second straight track state medal in the javelin as she finished fourth in the Class 4A meet. Earlier in the year, Moore broke a 20-year-old school record with a throw of 149 feet.

Moore was also a starter on the girls basketball team and helped the Lady Cats to their best finish in school history. Moore and the Lady Cats advanced to state for the first time in 47 years and took third overall. Individually, Moore eclipsed the 500-career rebound mark and was an honorable

mention all-league player. She led the team in rebounds with 8.6 boards a game and also averaged 7.3 points and 1.7 steals.

On the volleyball court, Moore started as an outside hitter for the Lady Cats and was second on the team with 174 kills and 195 digs.



Delaney Wright – Junior – Basketball, Track

Delaney Wright ended the 2020-21 school year with a bang as she became the school's first athlete to win three state championships in track in one season.

At the Class 4A state meet in Wichita last month, Wright won state titles in the long jump, 400-meter dash and 200-meter dash. She broke her own 200 and 400 school records to reach those accomplishments. On the season, Wright set new school

records in each of those events.

Wright was also a key player on the girls basketball team and helped the Lady Cats to their best finish in school history. Wright and the Lady Cats advanced to state for the first time in 47 years and took third overall at the Class 4A state tournament. Wright was one of the team' best defensive players as she averaged two deflections and a steal per game. She was also assigned to the team's best player.

MALE



Weston Guetterman – Senior – Football, Basketball

Weston Guetterman played big roles for both the Wildcat football and basketball teams this past season.

On the gridiron, Guetterman was the starting quarterback for

Louisburg, which finished 4-3 and tied for third in the Frontier League standings. Guetterman earned honorable mention All-League honors on defense for his play in the secondary. He finished the year with 32 tackles, two interceptions, three tackles for a loss and seven batted balls. He also finished with 548 yards rushing and six touchdowns.

Guetterman was one of the team leaders on the boys basketball team that advanced to its first state championship in school history and took second at the Class 4A state tournament. He was a second-team All-Frontier League selection from the point guard spot and averaged 12.5 points, 4.3 rebounds, 3.7 assists and 2.2 steals a game. He was also an all-state selection by the Topeka Capital-Journal, Wichita Eagle and Sports in Kansas.



Cade Holtzen – Senior – Cross Country, Wrestling, Track

Cade Holtzen was a three-sport athlete this past season for Louisburg and became the first male athlete (that is known) to participate in state competitions in all three sports, in the same season.

Holtzen helped the Wildcat cross country team to qualify for state for the first time in school history as they finished third at regionals. At state, Holtzen took 56th overall in 18 minutes and 46 seconds.

On the wrestling mat, Holtzen had a year to remember as he finished his career with a 155-19 record and a third-place state finish at 132 pounds. He was a four-time state qualifier for the Wildcats and a three-time state placer. Holtzen served as the team captain this past season and currently holds eight program records, including most season victories and most career wins. He was also chosen to participate in the 2021 Metro Classic.

In the spring, Holtzen earned his second state medal of the year as he helped the 4×800-meter relay team to a third place finish. He also helped the Wildcats to their second team Class 4A state track championship in school history.



Kolby Kattau – Junior – Football, Baseball

Kolby Kattau was a two-sport athlete this past season and had a good year for both the football and baseball program.

In the spring, Kattau helped the Wildcats to their first regional championship game since 2009 as he played both first base and pitcher. Kattau finished the year with a .444 average and racked up 32 hits for the Wildcats to go along with a .560 on-base percentage. He finished with five doubles, two triples, 16 RBIs, scored 26 runs and stole nine bases. He was a first team All-Frontier League selection and was an honorable mention all-state selection by the KBCA.

On the football field, Kattau played on both sides of the ball for a team that finished with a 4-3 record and tied for third in the Frontier League. He finished with two touchdowns from

the running back spot and had 41 tackles at linebacker.



Alec Younggren – Senior – Football, Wrestling

Alec Younggren was a two-sport athlete for Louisburg as he shined on the football field and on the wrestling mat.

Younggren, who missed part of the football season with an injury, still played well-enough on the offensive and defensive lines to earn All-Frontier League honors on both sides of the ball. Younggren was named as a first-team offensive lineman and an honorable mention lineman on defense.

He was a key fixture on the Wildcat offensive line that amassed more than 2,400 yards of total offense and 20 touchdowns. He also had 23 tackles on defense. Younggren was also an all-state honorable mention selection.

The Louisburg senior had an historic season in wrestling as he advanced to the 220-pound Class 4A championship match, where he finished runner-up. He finished the year with a 37-1 record and had Louisburg's highest state finish since 2012.



Braden Yows – Junior – Soccer

Louisburg junior Braden Yows was vital part of the Wildcats' best finish in school history this past season. Yows helped the Wildcats to a third place finish in the Class 4-1A state tournament.

Yows was a first-team All-Frontier League and all-state selection from his midfield spot. He broke a program record with 21 assists and also finished with seven goals on the year.

Louisburg boys volleyball ends regular season undefeated



Louisburg senior Wyatt Axmann sends a kill past a Lee's Summit West player during the Wildcats' home finale on May 5 at Louisburg High School.

Two years ago, Louisburg formed its first-ever boys volleyball team.

Boys volleyball, which is not a sanctioned sport by the Kansas State High School Activities Association, saw its rise in popularity in the Kansas City area. Schools began forming teams that played in their own league.

In fact, almost 60 schools formed teams back in 2019 and Louisburg had a successful season of its own.

Fast forward two years later, Louisburg continued its success as it finished undefeated in league play and were one of the best teams in the area despite missing last season due to COVID-19.

"The boys played great this year," Louisburg coach Geoff Branine said. "The second triangular we hosted, we had two of the top team's in the league and won both. We had our issues

to work through, but the boys found a way to win.

“It was good to get back on the court. Covid has been tough on all of us. It was great to have access to the high school this year. The larger facility allowed us to have more fans in the stands. We had great support from our community.”



Ben Rangel goes up for a kill during a home match earlier this season.

The highlight from the Louisburg season came on April 21 when the Wildcats hosted St. James Academy and Shawnee Mission, which was comprised of players from the entire district.

Louisburg held its own as the Wildcats defeated both teams and eventually led them to an undefeated regular season.

The Wildcat also had home wins over Rockhurst and De Soto/Mill Valley on April 7 and ended its home schedule with victories over Heritage Christian and Lee’s Summit West.

That eventually led them to the end of the season tournament. Louisburg opened pool play with victories over St. Thomas Aquinas and Heritage Christian and moved on to the gold bracket.



Louisburg setter Matthew Sword rises up for a pass during a

home match earlier this season.

Louisburg eventually lost in the first round to Karasuno and finished in fifth overall.

“We had a big comeback in the third period, but didn’t finish, and that put us fifth in the tournament,” Branine said. “Competition was better this year than in the past. Boys volleyball is growing, so more boys are playing. We finished second to St. James. We actually beat St. James this year. They ended up winning the big tournament and that put them into first.”

A big reason for the Wildcats’ success was their continuity as they had several varsity players return from their team in 2019.

Ben Rangel, Wyatt Axmann, Braden Branine, Ben Ratliff-Becher, Jacob Sanders, Matthew Sword, Dawson Barnes, Jesse Murphy, Brett Rangel and Isaiah Leonard all saw varsity time at one point in the season.



Members of the Louisburg High School varsity boys volleyball team are (from left) Braden Branine, Ben Rangel, Jacob Sanders, Wyatt Axmann, Dawson Barnes, Matthew Sword and Ben Ratliff-Becher.

It was a special group of boys according to coach Branine and they are helping grow a sport – that one day – can become a sanctioned high school activity.

“Boys volleyball has grown a lot in the last few years,” he said. “Unfortunately covid has hurt the growth of high school volleyball. Prior to the season being cancelled last year, we had almost 60 teams. This year we had 30. Some of that is simply because some of the teams couldn’t find a facility.

“Boys club is getting bigger and bigger so the level of high school volleyball gets better and better. We are still probably not getting KSHSAA going in next couple of years. MSHSAA (Missouri) will probably have boys volleyball in Kansas City area first.”

OPINION: Despite all the wins, Compliment cared for her players more



After 15 years, Louisburg head coach Jessica Compliment is stepping away from the program as she helped the Lady Cats to eight state tournament appearances.

Jessica Compliment is not even 40 yet, but she has already put together a resume that is worthy to put her in the Louisburg High School Hall of Fame.

As a 24-year-old first time head coach, the school hired Compliment 15 years ago in hopes of restarting the prominence of Louisburg volleyball that began with former coach Larry Harding.

She did that and then some.

- Eight state tournament appearances
- Seven top four finishes at state
- Three state runner-up trophies
- Compiled a 391-226 record
- Louisburg was named as the KVA Program of the Year in 2013
- She had numerous all-league and all-state players
- 4-time MO-KAN Small Class Coach of the Year

These were just some of the accomplishments Compliment was able to rack up during her time with the program – one that came to an end last month when she resigned as the team's head coach.

Compliment loves volleyball. She loves her players, but there was really one thing that could ever pull her away from those two things – family.

She is currently expecting her third child and Compliment wanted to focus more time with her children and her husband, Bret. She knew it was the right decision, but it didn't make it any less difficult – especially when it came to telling her team.

"It was tough to tell the players because saying it out loud and publicly, also meant that the end was here," Compliment said. "You form connections with the players over the years and with their families. I've had some families with a player in the program for eight, 10, 12 years so saying 'goodbye' in that aspect is hard too. They were all excited when I first told them I was pregnant with baby number 3, but I don't think anyone was expecting the second announcement."

Compliment had the opportunity to coach some of the best athletes to come through the school and they were able to accomplish big things together.



The 2015 Louisburg volleyball team pose for a shot after winning the league tournament. Members of the team (front row, from left) are Megan Lemke, Makenzie Kallevig, Lauren Dunn; (back row) coach Jessica Compliment, Olivia Bradley, Anna Dixon, Madison Turner, Cate Stambaugh and Sophie McMullen.

Possibly the school's most accomplished player, Missouri sophomore Anna Dixon, helped Louisburg to two state championship games under Compliment.

"Coach Compliment greatly cared about all of her players," Dixon said. "She was such a great outlet to have both on and off the court as a coach. I knew that if I ever needed help with anything, she would always be there. That is something every player wants.

"The success of the Louisburg volleyball program is extremely rare for a public school, especially a small town public school who is able to compete against some bigger schools. Being a part of that program that she sparked was something very memorable, that I will always be thankful to have experienced."

Even when her players left, Compliment would still be there to support them while they were in college – many times having her two younger kids in tow to travel and watch them play.

Sophie McMullen, who plays for Northwest Missouri State, and a member of the 2017 runner-up team, was thankful for everything her former coach did – and continues to do – for her.

“Compliment was like a second mother to me.” McMullen said. “I remember always going to her classroom whenever I could to talk about life, volleyball, or anything else possible. I am so beyond thankful that I was fortunate enough to have had her for four years. We still talk today and she still tries her very best (even with two kids and one on the way) to make it to my college games. I looked up to her and she was always there for me when I needed it the most.

“Senior year earning second place at state was one of the most heartbreaking times of my career, yet her putting the medal around my neck and hugging me for the last time, I knew that she was proud and it was a great run and nothing that happened that day was going to take away from the awesome four years that I had under her coaching. Our relationship was beyond a coach and athlete and I wouldn’t have had it any other way.”



Sophie McMullen shares a hug with coach Jessica Compliment following the state championship loss in 2017.

Louisburg volleyball has always been a family affair and Compliment has seen numerous siblings come through the program. Whether it was ones with the last name Dixon, Lemke, Kallevig, McMullen, Quinn or O'Brien – she appreciated everyone that played under her. She even had a couple of former players come back to help her coach.

"There have been a lot of great athletes and volleyball players to come through Louisburg High School and many have gone on to play at the collegiate level," Compliment said. "It's been fun to see them continue playing the sport that they love. Quite a few former players have also gone on to coach club, middle school, and high school volleyball. I've had the honor of having two former players as part of my coaching staff, Katie Dixon and Kallie O'Keefe. I enjoy

hearing their stories from time to time, and I’m glad to see that they are sharing their passion for the sport with the younger athletes.”

Sydney Dixon, who was a an all-state player on the 2013 team that finished second at state and went on to play at Fort Hays, remembers her time with the program fondly. She watched as an older sister (Katie), younger sister (Anna) – and even her brother Dane (a manager) – go through the program and appreciates what Compliment has done for her entire family.

“Coach Compliment started coaching me from a pretty young age going to camps all the way through high school,” Sydney said. “Not only was she supportive of me on the court and in our gym, but she would always make an effort to come watch club tournaments, graduation parties, go above and beyond with me in the class room, and so much more even into adulthood.

“It takes a special soul to not only coach my two sisters and I, but also having my brother be a manager. I know my parents are so thankful she handled that with such grace and patience.”



Louisburg head coach Jessica Compliment was named the GKCVCA Kansas Small-Class Coach of the Year in 2019. Compliment coached the Kansas team with assistant Kallie O'Keefe (left) and Leanna Willer.

Winning has always been important to Compliment – but never the most important. She wanted her players to succeed in life and that was always her goal.

With all the success the Lady Cats had the last 15 years, it didn't come without some heartbreak along the way. They were never able to get the program's first state title, even though they came really close on a couple occasions.

"I've learned that I can't go back and change a decision that was made, nor can I control the uncontrollables," Compliment said. "Sure, winning a state title would have been awesome, but I also can't be disappointed with the outcomes over the years. I was reminded by my high school coach that many

coaches dream of earning the opportunity to coach at a state tournament at least once in their career but never reach that goal. I have been fortunate enough to coach at eight state tournaments and have been a part of teams that placed in the top four seven years.

“When I was first hired at 24 years of age and without any previous head coaching experience, I don’t think I could have imagined all of the amazing opportunities and events that coaching here at Louisburg would offer or the amazing people I would meet along the way. I’ve also been blessed with many, many athletes with a love for volleyball, and who were dedicated and committed to this program and to their teammates.”

For me personally, her teams were always a joy to cover. I was always excited for volleyball season because I knew every year had a chance to be special. Most schools would love to have just a fraction of what Compliment and her teams were able to accomplish.

For the last decade or so, Louisburg has been pretty spoiled when it has come to volleyball and there are times where I have taken it for granted. Even in those “down” years, Compliment always had her team playing hard and that is the mark of a good coach.

It wasn’t the way she wanted it all to end – with a loss to Bishop Miege in the sub-state semifinals. She had her team playing like one of the best in the state last October, only to have to face the eventual state champion in the first round of postseason play.



Jessica Compliment waves to the crowd during her last state tournament appearance as the Lady Cat head coach.

Still, even in a loss, she had never been more proud of the way her players took on the challenge that day and fought till the end.

There are too many good memories to focus on the negatives and Compliment will leave behind plenty of positives to reminisce about. She will also still be there to support her former players.

“Some of my absolute best memories from high school were from volleyball and the program we all created together,” Sydney said. “I’m so grateful to have been a part of something so special, and Coach Compliment made a big impact on all of us. She will be missed so much, but I know she will continue to be her supportive, outgoing, loving, and patient self with all of her players for years to come.”

Once a coach, always a coach.

Compliment resigns as Lady Cat volleyball coach



Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment has resigned her post after 15 seasons with the Lady Cat program. Compliment helped guide the Lady Cats to eight state tournament appearances and three state runner-up finishes.

When Jessica Compliment walked off the floor following her team's semifinal sub-state loss to Bishop Miege back in October, the only thought on her mind was how that match was more like a state championship battle.

It wasn't your normal match as the two perennial state contenders had to square off so early in the postseason. She was proud of her team and was looking forward to another season of helping Louisburg volleyball get to another state tournament.

Little did she know, it would be the last time she would find herself on the Lady Cat sideline.

In late January, Compliment submitted her resignation as head volleyball coach as she will be stepping away to spend more time with her growing family as she, and her husband Bret, are

expecting their third child.

“It was a difficult decision, and I went back and forth on whether or not I could make the fall season work,” Compliment said. “I’ve put many, many hours into building this program, and stepping away from it wasn’t easy. My husband and I have been blessed with two little kiddos and are expecting our third this summer. It came down to that I couldn’t figure out a way to complete all of my duties of a head coach during the summer and at the start of the season while also being there for my three kids and husband. I have an amazing coaching staff with Leanna Willer and Kallie O’Keefe, and I know they would have been more than willing to pick up more of the load during the summer, but I didn’t feel like it was fair to them or to the players. Plus, I was starting to feel the pull that I needed to devote more time to my family.

“I had 10 seasons without kids so I could spend as much time as I wanted to over the summer and during the season at the school. My husband coaches as well, so thankfully he’s always understood the time commitment that goes into coaching. He has been a huge supporter over the years and quickly became a Louisburg volleyball fan. Over the past five seasons, I’ve had to learn to balance my time between coaching, teaching, and being a wife and mom. Every year since having kids, I hear from parents, ‘Enjoy this time! Before you know it they’ll be graduating’” ‘They’re only this little once so soak it all up.’ My daughter is getting to the point where she’s asking and wanting to participate in activities, and I’d like to be there for her. So I felt like it was time.”

Compliment certainly left her mark on the Louisburg volleyball program as she finished her 15th season back in October and has an impressive resume to show for it.

In the decade-and-a-half as the Lady Cat coach, Compliment guided Louisburg to eight state tournament appearances and placed in the top four of seven of them.

She also finished nine wins shy of 400 as she posted a record of 391-226 and helped Louisburg to three state championship matches.



Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment finished up her Louisburg career just nine wins shy of 400.

As tough as it was to come to the decision, it was an even tougher for Compliment to tell her team of the news. It came as a surprise to all of them.

“I was shocked to say the least,” junior setter Davis Guetterman said. “Next year will be a different atmosphere because Coach Compliment has ran this program since I’ve known it.

“She was always was there if you needed something and those 6 a.m. bus rides she was always pumped and ready to go even if you were half asleep.”

Those bus rides – and many other things – Compliment has had a hard time saying goodbye to, including those memories with her players. It has been just as difficult for some of her team.

“Coach Compliment was a very caring coach to all of her athletes through the years,” junior Rinny McMullen said. “From letting me jump in drills when I was in middle school, to coaching me almost up until my senior year, she was always there with open arms with an end goal of making each individual better.

“Not only was she a coach on the court, she was a great teacher and a great second mother figure when some of us needed it the most. She definitely never failed to make us smile and put us before herself 100 percent of the time.”

The problem with having such a successful run at coaching is it is hard to remember all those positives and Compliment has plenty to choose from.

She has three state runner-up finishes on her resume, including in 2013 when the Lady Cats were named the Kansas Volleyball Association Program of the Year. Compliment was also named the MO-KAN Small Class Coach of the Year three times and helped Louisburg to four Frontier League championships.

However, it is the little moments that Compliment looks back on the most.



Jessica Compliment was all smiles during a state tournament match in 2019.

“It’s true what they say about how you won’t remember all of the Ws or Ls, but you’ll remember the time spent together as a team, the relationships built, and those moments that make up a whole season or career,” Compliment said. “There are a lot of matches and moments that standout over the years, but honestly they do start to run together. Qualifying for state for the very first time is one that I don’t think I’ll ever forget. Beating Miege last year in the first round of sub state is another unforgettable match.

“There have been a lot of memorable moments, so it is hard to pick out a few, but one summer day that I’ll never forget is the day the senior moms (Mary Dvorak, Beth Dixon, and Angie O’Keefe) surprised me by throwing a bridal shower during an open gym practice. The best part was when the mom’s asked the

players to give me marital advice based on what they see/know from their own parents' marriage. There were a lot of laughs over their 'advice.' Dance parties….the volleyball team's hidden 'talent' over the years is dancing and singing. At the most random times one, two, or the whole team would break out the dance moves."

Now Compliment finds herself dancing off into the sunset as she takes great pride in what she has helped accomplish the last 15 years.

"It's kind of crazy when I look back over the years," Compliment said. "It hasn't always been smooth sailing. There were definitely some bumps along the way and some drama from time to time, but overall my experience as the head coach at Louisburg High School has been a positive one and one that I won't ever forget.

"I'm excited to see what the teams can accomplish next season and in the years to come. As I told the players at the meeting, I'll be their number one fan and cheering them on next season. I wish nothing but the best for the future of Louisburg volleyball and can't say enough thank yous to everyone who has supported me over the years. It has been quite the ride."

Top Louisburg Sports Stories of 2020

There hasn’t been a year like 2020, and for most people, they are ready to put it behind them and forget it ever existed.

Still, with all the challenges that 2020 brought, there were still plenty of positives to talk about when it came to Louisburg High School sports. History-making state places and state medals were plentiful on this list, but it wasn’t all positive. Louisburg had to say goodbye to a beloved town figure and athletes had to deal with the loss of spring sports.

Below are the top stories from 2020, 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. Thanks to the cancellation of spring sports, I don’t have the top 10 like I normally do, but I got close.

This year was a blast to cover, when I had the opportunity, anyway. Still, I am looking forward to what 2021 will bring. Thank you for everyone’s support and can’t wait for it all to begin again.



8. Ratliff-Becher wins state powerlifting title

After winning a state championship in 2019 Reilly Ratliff-Becher had every intention of backing up her performance during the Class 4A State Powerlifting Championships on March 7 at Piper High School.

In fact, the Louisburg senior wanted to improve it. Last

season, Ratliff-Becher took first in everything but squat, which she got runner-up.

This time around, she got the clean sweep.

Ratliff-Becher took first in bench, squat and clean and that led to her second straight state championship in the 180-pound class.

“It means a lot to me that I was able to win the state title again,” Ratliff-Becher said. “I set a goal for myself to win first in everything since I had got second in squat last year and I achieved it. Even though it wasn’t my best showing with the numbers I got on my lifts.

“The competition was very good this year, as it always is. But, fortunately with all the work I put in to at least maintain my numbers from last year, meant I was able to lift bigger amounts than my competition.”



7. Conley named state and midwest coach of the year

After a third place finish to end the year, Louisburg boys

soccer coach Kyle Conley was recognized among the state's best.

Conley was named as the Class 4-1A Coach of the Year by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association in November.

He guided the Wildcats to a 16-2 record on the season and the team's highest finish in program history when Louisburg ousted Rose Hill, 3-0, in the state third-place game.

Just a few weeks later, Conley was honored once again – this time on the girls' side.

Despite the lost season, the United Soccer Coaches wanted to recognize coaches for their past accomplishments and for what this past spring was supposed to hold.

Atop that list was Conley as he was named as the Small School Midwest Coach of the Year.

"I am absolutely honored to receive this award," Conley said. "There are so many great coaches in the Midwest, but to me this is a program award. None of this is possible without everyone involved; girls coming to work their tails off everyday, parents traveling and supporting us anywhere and everywhere, community helping with supporting the program, the school supporting the girls, etc. Without the support and buy in from the girls, parents and community none of this is possible."

The Wildcat girls program has had a successful start in its four years. Conley has a 54-22-2 record during that span, that included two state runner-ups and another state final four appearance.



6. Louisburg cheer places third at state

The Louisburg cheer squad had to do its postseason competition a little different this year thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It didn’t seem to bother them much as the defending state champions found themselves right in the thick of things again.

Although they didn’t repeat as champs, they were still among the state’s best as the Wildcats cheerleaders finished third in the state back in November.

Unlike performing in front of judges like they did in 2019, the Wildcats had to video tape their performance and send it in to be judged. It fared well as they tallied 83.35 points to finish in the top 3.

Baldwin earned the state title with 88.85 points and Abilene was second with 85.25.

Members of the Louisburg cheer squad are Bella Feikert, Addison Drake, Brooklyn Harmon, Jayden Trester, Maddy Carpenter-Ross, Sophie Katzer, Sammy McDaniel, Julia Arriola, Andrea Gaza, JoJo Hendrickson, Sydney Dudzik, Abby Bradley, Anna Poe, Sienna Finch, Mable Graham, Audrey Anderson, Zoe Weers, Anna Morrison and Maggie Madison



5. Holtzen, Owens earn state medals for Wildcat wrestling

Ryan Owens and Cade Holtzen both had their own agendas going into the state wrestling tournament.

Owens, qualified for state last year, but left without a win and he vowed to fix that this time around. As for Holtzen, he came up short in his efforts for a second state medal as a

sophomore last season and had all the motivation not to come home empty-handed again.

Both wrestlers more than made up for their rough patches a year ago.

Owens and Holtzen left Salina with a state medal during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships on Friday and Saturday at the Tony’s Pizza Events Center.



Owens made it to the semifinals and wound up earning a fourth-place medal at 120 pounds, while Holtzen finished fifth at 126 pounds.

It also marked the first time since 2016 that Louisburg finished the season with multiple state medalists, when Nathan Keegan and Mason Koechner each brought home medals.

The Wildcats nearly had three medalists as sophomore Brandon Doles finished one win shy of a state medal at 160 pounds with a 2-2 record.



4. Dennis steps down as LHS team doctor

Almost every day of the week, if you were looking for Damon Dennis, he could be found at his office on 11 S. Broadway St., helping treat those pesky aches and pains, taking X-rays, or mending those beaten up athletes after a game.

Doc D – as he his affectionately known – opened Louisburg Chiropractic Office 28 years ago and has served as the

Louisburg High School athletic team doctor for almost that same amount of time.

Dennis has seen it all. The walls in his office are lined with mementos from his years of service to both the community and the high school.

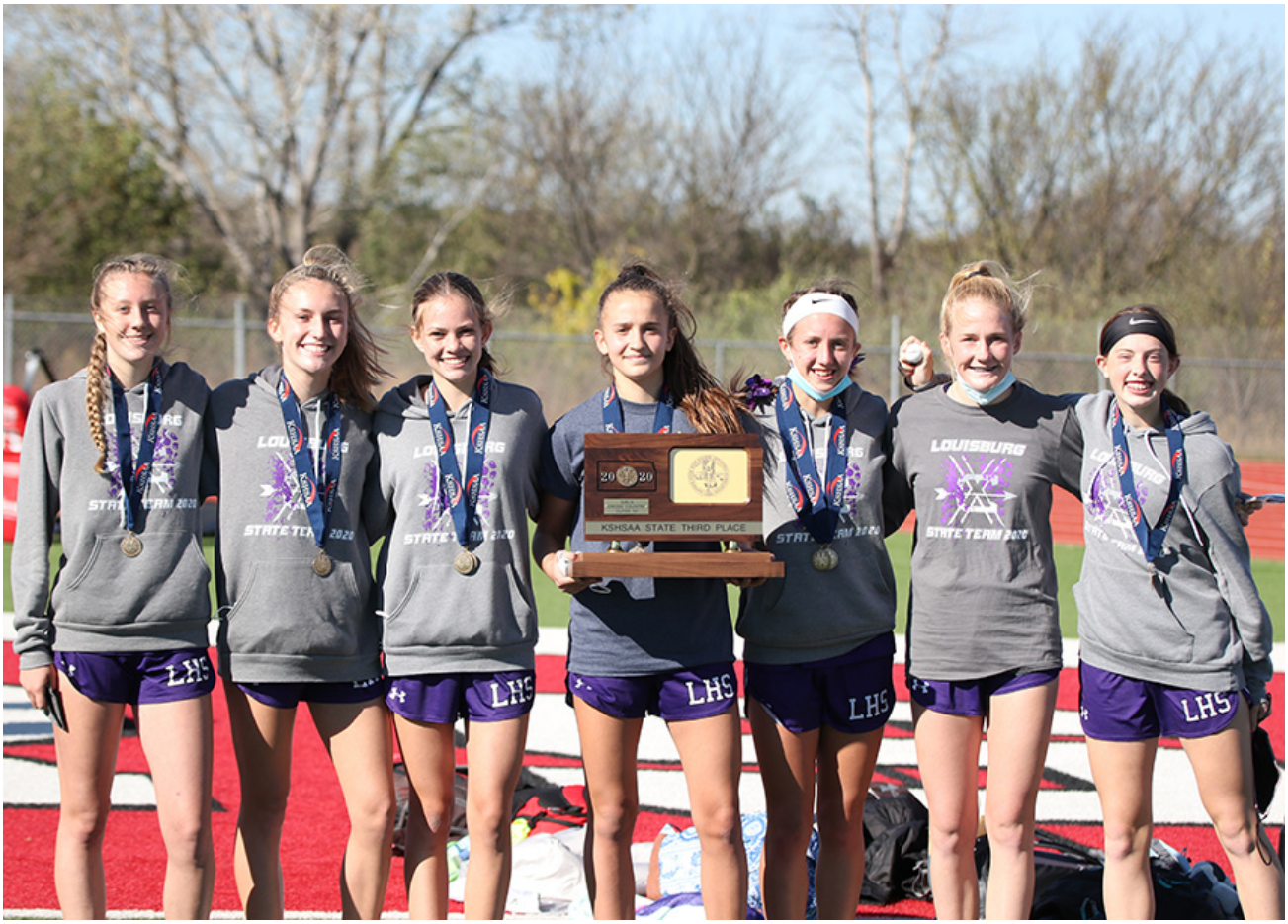
He has taped thousands of ankles, seen even more patients and has touched many lives during his time in Louisburg. That is why this week is one of the more emotional times in his life.

In May, he left Louisburg Chiropractic Office and handed the reins over to Dr. Jake Polzin. Add to that, Dennis also stepped away as LHS' team doctor and left an absence on the sidelines and behind the mic that many in Louisburg have come to know.

"My decision to step down and sell the practice has turned out to be the hardest thing I have ever done," Dennis said. "I have poured everything I have into my job and community. It has become my entire existence. I was taught from a young age to serve others and your community. I feel like the pressures I have put on myself have become unhealthy. I have put about 40 years work in to 28 and feel like there is never going to be a good time to make such a huge life change.

"That being said, I feel like I need to make changes while I am still able to do the things that will be best for my family. Dr. Polzin came along and I think he will carry on the work at the office wonderfully. We are a lot alike in many ways. I could not have found anyone better to replace me."

For many, Dennis has been a big part of people's lives, especially in the athletic arena. He has served as the LHS team doctor since 1992 and has treated many athletes in those 28 years.



3. Girls Cross Country Takes Third at State

For 23 years, the Louisburg cross country program has been chasing a top three finish at the Class 4A meet.

The Wildcats have had several teams qualify, especially in the last few seasons, but have always come up short of their goal. Following Saturday's race in Wamego, the Wildcats can finally stop running after it.

The Louisburg girls put together an historic performance at the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships at Wamego Country Club. The Lady Cats earned a state plaque with a third place finish as they surpassed Buhler by eight points to record the school's first top three state finish.

Junior Reese Johnson, sophomores Claire Brown, Bree Gassman and Nova Ptacek, along with freshmen Lola Edwards, Maddy Rhamy and Erin Apple, will all go down in school history as they became the first Wildcat team to bring home state hardware.

“It means the world to me to be a part of the first team ever to place at state,” Rhamy said. “Coming into the state meet, I was just hoping our team would be in the top half, so you could imagine my excitement when our team placed third. I didn’t even know we made school history until our coaches told us.”

Rhamy was one of two freshmen who earned top 10 finishes individually, along with Edwards. Rhamy finished eighth overall in 20 minutes and 58 seconds, while Edwards was right behind her in 10th in 21:02.

Junior Reese Johnson also garnered a state medal as she was 15th in 21:28 to help the Lady Cats to an historic performance.

It was a proud moment for many in the Louisburg program, and included in that is John Reece. The longtime Wildcat head coach was all smiles following his team’s performance.

“It is 23 years the making,” coach Reece said. “You always have the plans and goals to get to state and then you get a group to go to state and do something great. This year was one of those. With the Frontier League as tough as it is, and then getting third there, put it in our heads that maybe we could do this. They all went out and ran their races, and that just shows their grit and determination and who they are.”

A week earlier, the Wildcats also made history as its was the first time in school history when they qualified the entire boys team to the state meet as they took third at regionals.



2. Boys Soccer Finishes Runner-Up At State

As the Louisburg players huddled around their state plaque, many of them looked at it in awe and wonder.

“Hey guys, we won this,” a player shouted.

The statement was obvious at the time, but nonetheless, their excitement was more than warranted.

For the first time in program history, the Louisburg boys soccer team brought home a plaque from the state final four as the Wildcats defeated Rose Hill, 3-0, on Saturday in the third place match of the Class 4-1A state tournament at Stryker Sports Complex in Wichita.

It was only the second time in school history that the Wildcats had it made it this far, with the other being in 2016, when they finished fourth.

“There are only six teams in the entire state that get to end their year with a win and we wanted to be one of those teams,” Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. “We want to be able to hang up a banner on our field and we wanted a plaque so that no one can forget what these kids earned and what they did this season. I am so proud of all of them.”

It was a program defining moment for the Wildcats as they began the weekend searching for a state championship, but lost 2-0 to Bishop Miege on Friday in the semifinals. Still, recording the best finish in school history is nothing for someone to hang their head about, and the Wildcats came out Saturday wanting to make sure they brought some hardware home.

“It’s absolutely crazy to think about what we have accomplished this year, partly because I have only played soccer in high school,” senior captain Logan Faulkner said. “Bringing a state plaque back will just be a reminder of what we did and how we reached our goal.”



1. COVID-19 Cancels Spring Sports

In March, 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 it was a challenge for the Louisburg girls soccer, track and field, baseball, softball, golf and swim teams.

Many of those teams had big postseason aspirations after success in 2019 and were left wondering what could have been.

Pritchard looking forward to opportunity with Emporia State program



Carleigh Pritchard always had a good idea of where she wanted to play volleyball and it was going to take a lot to pull her away from the school where everything seemed to fall into place.

That place is Emporia State University.

Pritchard made it official in November in front of family and friends at Louisburg High School when she signed her letter of intent to play for the Hornets. It was a moment she won't soon forget.

"I'm so excited to have the opportunity to play collegiate volleyball," Pritchard said. "I always knew I wanted to coach volleyball. It has been a dream of mine since I started playing volleyball, and I knew that to be a successful coach I needed to get as much experience as possible. I started the recruiting process my sophomore year, and it took off from there. It has been a dream of mine to play collegiate volleyball, I love the game and I'm so excited to see what next year brings."

The Louisburg senior has had her eye on Emporia for a long time. Her father, Cris, played football for the Hornets and she has made several trips to the campus.

Also, the fact Emporia had her major was just icing on the cake for Pritchard as she looks to continue her volleyball career for another four years.

“I think I always knew I wanted to go to Emporia,” Pritchard said. “There are a lot of things I loved about the school. My dad played college football there and we would take a lot of trips down to campus, so I was already familiar with it. I love their campus and the town, it has a small town feel like Louisburg does.

“I also wanted to go to that school because they have a very good education program. I want to be a teacher and they are one of the best colleges for education. I also love the team and my coaches I am going to play for.”



Louisburg senior Carleigh Pritchard signed her letter of intent to play volleyball at Emporia State. Sitting next to Carleigh (from left) is her brother Chase, her father Cris and mother Samantha. Standing is Louisburg assistant Leanna Willer

and head coach Jessica Compliment.

That team, which had to take the fall off due to COVID-19, is a regular fixture in the MIAA Tournament under coach Bing Xu, who is in his 16th season with the Hornets.

“I am so excited to play for coach Bing,” Pritchard said. “I love how he makes the team feel like one big family. He is an amazing coach and has so much knowledge about the game and I am excited to see how far he will take me and how much I’m going to improve as an athlete.”

Volleyball has been a big part of Pritchard’s life as she started playing club volleyball her freshman year along with four years of high school. Her growth has been apparent as she has earned all-league and all-state honors along the way.

Pritchard, who was the team’s starting middle hitter for most of the season, missed a few weeks due to injury, but still made a big impact for the Lady Cats. Pritchard finished the year with 169 kills and 36 blocks to go along with 17 aces.

That success led her to earn second team All-Frontier League honors and was a Class 4A honorable mention selection.

Pritchard has enjoyed her time with the Louisburg, and along with her training in the offseason, she has the opportunity to continue to play the sport she loves.

“Playing club volleyball has definitely prepared me for the next level,” Pritchard said. “I started club volleyball after my freshman high school season, and just that year alone I improved so much. Because of club volleyball and my amazing trainers, I was able to go from freshman volleyball straight to varsity my sophomore year. I am so happy I got the opportunity to play varsity three years.

“I believe that at Louisburg, we have two of the best setters in the nation and getting the opportunity to play with them made me so much better. They made me a better hitter. Now with

club volleyball, I am on a team that is for sure playing at the college level and speed. I have three of the top club coaches in the nation who know so much about the game. I know they are going to get me ready for next year.”