

Two LHS students help MAVS to national volleyball championship



Louisburg's Wyatt Axmann (left) and Ben Ratliff-Becher pose for a picture after helping the Kansas City-MAVS volleyball team to a national championship earlier this month.

In a packed and deafening arena in Dallas, Texas, Louisburg's Wyatt Axmann and Ben Ratliff-Becher looked around and couldn't believe what was about to happen.

With the rest of their Kansas City-MAVS volleyball teammates, Axmann and Ratliff-Becher were on the verge of completing memorable journey – one they weren't sure was always possible.

In the 16 USA Volleyball National Championship match on July 5, the MAVS huddled up one point away from winning the biggest trophy either player had ever seen. When the MAVS forced a side out and took the second set in a 25-22 win, the bench emptied and they celebrated their USA Division National Championship.

"The experience was amazing," Ratliff-Becher said. "There is nothing else like it. You're out on the court and there are announcers and huge stands and it feels like you are playing in an Olympic game. I don't think I'll ever forget that moment."

Playing for six years, Ratliff-Becher is a veteran to the sport of boys volleyball and has dreamed to be in this position. For Axmann, he didn't join Mavs program till February of 2018 and had little volleyball background.

That didn't stop him from contributing in a big way to the Mavs this season as he played on the front left side and also saw some time in the middle of the back row.

"It meant the world to me and my team to win a national title," Axmann said. "We had worked so hard together for such a long time and it was amazing to see all of our hard work pay off."



Louisburg's Ben Ratliff-Becher (front row, second from left) and Wyatt Axmann (front row, second from right) helped the MAVS to a 10-1 record in the tournament.

Ratliff-Becher was a defensive specialist for the MAVS and was a back-up libero. Both Louisburg players saw significant time during the 11-match tournament as they played big roles on the floor and off.

“I was also a really big cheerleader on the bench,” Ratliff-Becher said. “The entire experience was awesome.

I love volleyball so much and winning a national title means so much to me. It was such a great experience and it’s one to remember for a lifetime.

“Going into the year, we knew we could win it. We honestly had all the right players at the right time. Everyone on the team had a role to play and they played that role perfectly.”

The MAVS finished the tournament with a 10-1 record and rallied back to avenge their only loss later in the competition.

Volleyball has been a fixture in both players’ lives this past year as they also both played for the Louisburg High School boys team that was started this year and played in a league in Kansas City.

“The tournament was crazy from beginning to end,” Axmann said. “We ended 10-1 so we didn’t lose much, which was crazy. Our team just had to keep talking with each other and making sure our heads were on straight.

“Playing volleyball for MAVS and our Louisburg team has been on the biggest blessings in my

life. I would encourage anyone and everyone to at least give it a try."

Dixon named to U-20 Junior National Team, will play in World Championships



Louisburg High School graduate, and Kansas State freshman, Anna Dixon was recently selected to the Junior National Team and will represent Team USA in the World Championships in Mexico.

Anna Dixon hasn't officially played in her first collegiate match with Kansas State yet, but Dixon has spent this summer traveling all over the world honing her volleyball skills.

Earlier this week, the Louisburg High School graduate received even more good news.

Dixon was selected to the Under 20 Junior National Team that will compete in the World Championships in Mexico later this week. Dixon will represent Team USA as she will go up against some

of the best the world has to offer.

"It is a huge honor to make the Junior National Team," Dixon said. "It has been a goal of mine since I started playing volleyball competitively, so accomplishing that goal was an amazing feeling. I'm very excited to compete for a gold medal in Mexico. We have some tough competition, but it will be a wonderful experience and I can't wait."

Dixon and Team USA will begin pool play on July 12 against Mexico, then follow it up with matches against Italy and Cuba to complete action. The national team will be led by University of Texas head coach, Jerritt Elliott.

Dixon was one of 20 players invited to train in Colorado Springs earlier this month for the Junior National Team and the roster was eventually whittled down to 12. Those 12 will participate in the 2019 FIVB Women's U20 World Championship July 12-21 in Léon Guanajuato & Aguascalientes, Mexico. The U.S. qualified for the World Championship by winning the 2018 NORCECA Women's U20 Continental Championship.

Hosts Mexico will be up against USA, Italy and Cuba in Pool A, while reigning WU-20 champions China will take on Poland, Egypt and Peru in Pool B. Pool C includes 2017 runners-up Russia, Turkey, Argentina and Serbia. The last edition of the competition's bronze

medallists Japan are in Pool D with Brazil, who with six titles have won the competition more than any other nation, the Dominican Republic and Rwanda.

In June, Dixon traveled with the Kansas State volleyball team to Brazil where they trained with the Brazilian U20 National team and also played several exhibition matches. Brazil is considered one of the best countries in the world for volleyball as it won Olympic gold medals in 2008 and 2012.

Dixon was also chosen to train with the Collegiate National Team in Anaheim, Calif.

“My experience in Brazil was incredible,” Dixon said. “Not just getting to play against different teams there, but actually building relationships down there and getting to understand and respect their culture.”

When the hectic summer for Dixon has finally ended, she knows she will be ready when her collegiate season gets underway in the fall.

“I feel like my experiences over the summer has pushed me to grow as a player and a person, tremendously,” Dixon said. “Seeing high level competition that resembles the Big 12 play gave me an idea of what to expect going into my college career and made me more prepared. I’m very excited to see what our team can do in the fall.”

Stiles, Lohse, Burk and Bowes to be inducted into LHS Hall of Fame



Dennis Stiles (top left), John Lohse (top right), Jason Burk (bottom left) and Krystal (Bowes) Grojean will be inducted into the Louisburg High School Athletic Hall of Fame this fall.

It has been 11 years since Louisburg High School had inducted a class into its athletic hall of fame, but the wait for a new class is finally over.

The USD 416 Endowment Association, which oversees the LHS Athletic Hall of Fame, has announced a new 4-member class. Dennis Stiles (Class of 1969), John Lohse (1995), Jason Burk (1999) and Krystal (Bowes) Grojean (2001) were the top four vote getters in this year's hall of fame voting and will be honored in an induction ceremony sometime this fall.

"Louisburg has a history of great athletes," said Damon Dennis, a USD 416 Endowment Association board member. "We had a good cross-section of both young and older voters this year that really took their job seriously. The four athletes chosen represent several generations of former Wildcats and each one were dominant in their particular era and sports. The Endowment Association is excited to get the Hall of Fame going again and plan on some big things in the future."

More than two dozen voters, that includes current members of the hall of fame, long-time Louisburg residents, teachers and coaches, voted on the class in June. Each voter was asked to submit their top four choices for the hall and votes were then tabulated.

To be eligible for the hall of fame, the inductee must wait at least 10 years following graduation to be nominated.

The last class that was inducted was in 2008 and Dennis, and the rest of the Endowment Association, is committed to making this a yearly occurrence moving forward.

Here

are the accomplishments of each of the newest hall of fame inductees. Look for
more information on an induction ceremony in the coming weeks.



Dennis Stiles

Dennis Stiles – Class of 1969 – Football, Basketball, Track

Stiles

lettered 4 years in football and
track and 3 years in basketball. His senior year he was named
all-league and
all-state in football and was co-captain on the Wildcat team

that finished the year 4-4.

As sophomore, he played on the varsity basketball team which was 12-0 in league play, finished the year 19-3 and were district champions. He earned honorable mention all-state honors his sophomore and junior seasons and was second-team all-state his senior year. Stiles was at one time the school's career scoring leader.

Stiles competed at the state track meet as a junior and senior where he placed fourth in the discus his senior year. He previously held school records in the discus and triple jump. He also received a football scholarship to Kansas State University.



John Lohse

John Lohse – Class of 1995 – Football, Basketball and Baseball

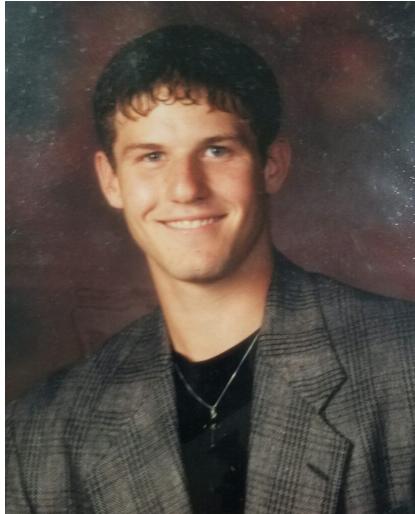
Lohse lettered all four years in baseball and was selected to

represent Kansas in the all-star baseball classic his senior year. He was an all-league pitcher and centerfielder for the Wildcats his sophomore through senior years. He had a .510 average his junior and senior seasons with 10 home runs his junior year and 12 more his senior season.

In football, Lohse was a 3-year letterwinner. He was an all-league wide receiver his junior and senior seasons. In his senior year, he had 850 yards receiving and 11 touchdowns and was later selected to represent Kansas in the Metro Classic All-Star Game.

Lohse was also a 3-year letterwinner in basketball and was an all-league selection his junior and senior seasons. He averaged a double-double his junior and senior years.

Post-graduation, Lohse attended Pittsburg State on a baseball scholarship and played on the Gorilla team for four years. He was selected to the all-MIAA team his sophomore and junior seasons before injuring his shoulder his senior year. He had a .315 average his junior and senior seasons. In his first collegiate at-bat his freshman year, Lohse hit a game-winning grand slam to give Pitt State its first win over Missouri Southern in five years.



Jason Burk

Jason Burk – Class of 1999 – Track and Football

Burk was a 4-year letterwinner for the Louisburg track and field team and qualified for state in all four years in four events. He accumulated 12 state medals, 16 regional track medals and 14 Frontier League medals. Burk was selected to the Kansas City All-Metro track team in 1998 and 1999.

During his senior season, Burk was a state champion in both the triple and long jump. He won the triple jump with a leap 48 feet and the long jump with a mark of 22-5. He also finished fifth in the 100-meter dash and sixth in the high jump. As a junior, Burk won a state championship in the triple jump with mark of 46 feet and won three more state medals. He took second long jump, fourth in the 100 dash and sixth in the 200 dash. As a sophomore, Burk won state medals in the triple jump (second), long jump (fourth)

and 4x100 relay (third). He was a member of the 4x100 team that took second at state as a freshman in 1996.

At one time, Burk held seven school records. He currently holds school records in the triple jump, high jump and long jump. Burk holds the school record for most points in a season with 326.

Burk also played football, where he was a part of bi-district, district and regional championship teams.



Krystal (Bowes) Grojean

Krystal (Bowes) Grojean – Class of 2001 – Volleyball, Basketball, Track

Bowes was a 4-year letterwinner in track before she was offered a scholarship on the Wichita State track and field team.

In her senior season at Louisburg, Bowes earned three state medals, including a second-place finish in the javelin with a throw of 145-10. She was also third in the discus with a toss of 126-9 and fifth in the shot put at 37-5. As a sophomore and junior, she finished sixth in the discus at state. In all, Bowes racked up five state medals in her high school career before moving on to Wichita State. She is the current Louisburg record holder in the javelin (146-10) and discus (137-11).

At Wichita State, she earned academic All-American honors and was a team captain all four years. Bowes was a two-time NCAA national qualifier and finished fifth in the javelin and was second in the Missouri Valley Conference in 2006. In 2004, Bowes took first in the MVC in the javelin and fourth in the discus. In 2003, she won the Missouri Valley Conference discus title, was second in the javelin and fourth in the hammer throw. Bowes was also a member of two Shocker teams that won conference titles.

In volleyball and basketball at LHS, Bowes was a 3-year letterwinner in each sport and earned first-team all-Frontier League honors each season.

Current members of the LHS Hall of Fame

Class of 2005:

Tom

Stevens – 1934 – Track and Field (High Jump)

1947/48

Undefeated Football Teams

Richard

Meiers – 1949 – Basketball/Football

Don

Meek – 1965-1998 – Coach/Administrator

Larry

Harding – 1976-1994 – Volleyball/Golf Coach

Amy

Dodson Goode – 1986 – Volleyball/Basketball

Class of 2006:

Jim

Wells – 1936 – Track and Field (Pole Vault)/Football

Doug

Eaton – 1971 – Wrestling

Sue

Truman Apple – 1974 – Track and Field/Volleyball/Basketball

Mike

Meek – 1985- Football/Wrestling/Track and Field

Jamie

Waite – 1991 – Track and Field (Pole Vault)/Football/Basketball

Class of 2007

Alan

Taylor – 1949 – Football

Tim

Dozier – 1987 – Wrestling/Football

Beth
Dodson Dixon – 1989 – Volleyball/Basketball

Jeff
Lohse – 1991 – Baseball/Football/Basketball

Class of 2008

Greg
Kahmann – 1987 – Baseball/Football/Basketball

Mark
Buckingham – 1994 – Basketball

Buffington named 2019 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year



Not many athletes had the opportunity to experience the success Carson Buffington did during the 2018-19 school year.

Buffington found herself in two state championship matches and was a team captain in all three seasons. The 2019 Louisburg High School graduate played at a high level in all

the sports she competed in and did so with the respect of her teammates or coaches.

Those are just a few of the reasons why Buffington was chosen as the 2019 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year.

The award, which is in its second year, is to recognize an outstanding LHS student athlete. Louisburg Sports Zone asked the head coaches at LHS to submit nominations and those nominations were then organized and submitted back to the coaches for a vote.

The coaches then submitted their top three choices and the number of votes were added up, which decided the winner.

Buffington began her memorable senior year on the volleyball court as she helped the Lady Cats to a state runner-up finish for the second consecutive season. She was an outside hitter on the 2018 squad, which was a position she had to learn on the fly.

She spent the last two seasons as the team's starting setter and Buffington made the move to the front line – which gave her team the best chance to win.

Along with her state runner-up finish, Buffington also earned second team All-Frontier League honors and was named to the Greater Kansas City Volleyball Coaches Association Senior All-Star match.

"Carson was a great leader again this

past season and played a vital role on the team," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "She handled transitioning to a new position with a lot of grace and was bound and determined to learn the ins/outs of being a hitter, than a setter. She previously ran our offense as the setter for two years. But as with each new season, new players are added to the mix and the possibility of changing positions/rosters arises.



(From left) Louisburg girls assistant soccer coach Michael Pickman, Louisburg head volleyball coach Jessica Compliment, Carson Buffington, Louisburg head girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry and Louisburg head girls soccer coach Kyle Conley

"I was very proud of how she 'handed' over the reins of the offense to two freshmen and how she encouraged and pushed them every day in practice. She was a great role model. Carson added a lot of emotional energy when we needed it and made huge plays at important times throughout matches."

Buffington was also a big part of the Lady Cat basketball team this past season, despite finishing short of a state tournament. She earned all-league and all-state honorable mention honors after she averaged eight points, seven rebounds and three steals per game.

She currently holds a school record with 864 career rebounds and was an all-league player for her entire four year stint with the Louisburg basketball team.

"Carson is one of the hardest working players that I have worked with coaching basketball, boys or girls," Louisburg girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry said. "She never took a day off and always led by example. Carson was relentless as a player and was always the first one on the floor for a loose ball. As good an athlete, she is an even better young woman with great character, integrity, unselfishness and passion."

Buffington might have had her most successful season, both team-wise and individually, in the spring as the Wildcats' starting goalkeeper on the Louisburg girls' soccer team.

For the second year in a row, the Wildcats were the Class 4-1A state runner-up and Buffington was a big reason why. She started all 20 games and set school records in shutouts (13), saves in a season (115), goals against average (.952) and wins (17).

With all that success, Buffington was named the Class 4-1A Goalkeeper of the Year by the Kansas Soccer Coaches

Association.

"Carson in her first year as the starting goalkeeper was unbelievable," Louisburg girls soccer coach Kyle Conley said. "She kept us in a lot of games and even won us a few. Carson is in her third year ever playing soccer as well. She started her sophomore year and has grown so much. She is a gifted three sport athlete and it shows in her ability to play goalkeeper. She has a fantastic attitude and work ethic."

2019 Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Year nominees



For the past three 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 second 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. In the next week, I will announce this year's recipients.

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!

FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



CARSON BUFFINGTON – SENIOR – BASKETBALL, SOCCER, VOLLEYBALL

Carson was a 3-time letter winner in her senior season and was named as a team captain in volleyball, basketball and soccer.

In volleyball, Buffington earned second team All-Frontier League honors as she helped lead the Lady Cats to a Class 4A state runner-up performance. She also moved from her starting setter position to the outside hitter spot and had a lot of success for the Lady Cats as she tallied 130 kills in her new position. With all that success, Buffington was also selected to the Greater Kansas City Volleyball Coaches Association Senior All-Star Match.

Buffington also wrapped up a strong career for the Louisburg basketball team as she averaged eight points and seven rebounds to go along with three steals a contest. She was named as a Frontier League honorable mention this past season, and she also was selected as an all-state honorable mention.

In girls soccer, Buffington was the starting goalie for Louisburg in all 20 games. She posted 13 shutouts, which is a school record and had a .952 goals against average, which is also a school record. Buffington had 90 saves on the season that ended as a Class 4-1A state runner up for the second consecutive year. For her efforts, she was also selected second team All-Frontier League. Buffington was also named first team all-state goalie and was named Goalkeeper of the Year.



ANNA DIXON – SENIOR – VOLLEYBALL

Anna wrapped up her fourth volleyball season as a varsity starter for the Lady Cats and guided Louisburg to its second consecutive Class 4A-state runner-up finish.

Dixon, who is currently with the Kansas State volleyball team, ended her senior season with 584 kills and had a hitting percentage of .260. She also added 325 digs, 50 aces and 42 blocks as she played all six rotations. With those lofty numbers, Dixon earned several big time honors in her final season.

She was selected as an All-Frontier League first team player and was also named to the 4A State All-Tournament Team. Those honors continued as she was named the Kansas Volleyball Coaches Association Class 4A Player of the Year and earned a spot on KVA All-State First Team.

Following the season, Dixon was also named as an Under-Armour All-American also earned MaxPreps/American Volleyball Coaches Association Player of the Week honors.



ALYSE MOORE – SOPHOMORE – BASKETBALL, SOFTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD

Alyse is a 3-sport varsity letter-winner this past year as she earned letters for the basketball, softball and track and field teams. This past spring season, Moore went to state in two different sports and became the first Wildcat athlete in recent memory to do so.

In her first season in track and field, Moore threw the javelin for the Lady Cats and went on to become regional champion as she

eclipsed her personal best throw by almost 25 feet in just her third competition of the season. The following week, she medaled fourth at the Class 4A state tournament with a personal best throw of 131 feet and 9 inches.

Moore was also the starting shortstop for the Lady Cats as she helped Louisburg to its first regional championship since 2014.

During the basketball season, Moore was a starter for the Lady Cats and averaged six points, five rebounds and three steals a game.



TRINITY MOORE – JUNIOR – CROSS COUNTRY, SOCCER

Trinity is 2-sport letter-winner for Louisburg this past year as she had state performances in both cross country and soccer.

During the fall, Moore was the top runner on the Louisburg

girls cross country team as she helped the Lady Cats to a regional runner-up finish and qualified for state as a team for the first time in school history. Moore medaled fourth at the Class 4A state meet in Wamego and currently holds the school record for the fastest time in program history. She also earned first-team All-Frontier League honors for her third place finish at the league meet.

In soccer, Moore was a starter on the Wildcat team that recently finished as the Class 4-1A state runner-up for the second consecutive year. At the midfield spot, she finished the season with 12 goals and six assists and was also named to the All-Frontier League first team.



DELANEY WRIGHT – FRESHMAN – BASKETBALL, CROSS

COUNTRY, TRACK AND FIELD

Delaney is a 3-sport letter-winner as she took part in cross country, basketball and track and field and competed at the state level in two of those.

Wright found most of her success in track and field as she earned four medals at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships in Wichita this past month. She medaled in the long jump, 400-meter-dash, 200-meter dash and as a member of the 4x400-relay.

During the regional meet, Wright broke two school records (long jump, 400 dash) and earned a regional and Frontier League title in the long jump. She also earned a medal in the long jump at the Kansas Relays earlier in the season.

In cross country, Wright was a member of the Louisburg team that finished as a Class 4A regional runner-up and qualified for the state meet as a team for the first time in school history. In basketball, Wright saw playing time at the varsity level as a freshman at different points throughout the season.

MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



BLUE CAPLINGER – SENIOR – BASEBALL, FOOTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD, WRESTLING

Blue is a 4-sport letter-winner in football, wrestling, baseball and track and field and competed at the state level in two of the sports.

In football, Caplinger was an All-Frontier League player on both sides of the ball as he was named to the first team defense as a defensive back and second team offense as a multi-purpose player. On defense, Caplinger, who helped Louisburg to a 10-1 record and a regional championship, had 31 tackles from the safety spot and also had two tackles for a loss, two fumble

recoveries and an interception. Offensively, he had 544 total yards and six touchdowns.

On the wrestling mat, Caplinger was a regional champion at 170 pounds and finished his season with a 33-5 record. The Louisburg senior fell one match short of state medal with a 2-2 record at the Class 4A state tournament. He currently holds the school record for most career reversals (72) and most career escapes (86). Following the season, he was also named to the KWCA Academic All-State first team.

Caplinger split time between baseball and track and field in the spring. Although he spent time as a reserve and pinch-runner on the baseball team, Caplinger found a lot of success on the track.

He qualified for state as a member of two relays. Caplinger was a member of the 4x400 relay team that won the Class 4A state championship in 3 minutes and 25 seconds. Caplinger also helped the 4x100 relay to a fifth place finish and went on to garner two state medals.

Caplinger will join the Benedictine football team this fall.



AUSTIN MOORE – SENIOR – FOOTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD, WRESTLING

Austin is a 3-sport letter winner in football, wrestling and track and field and was among the state's best in two of the sports.

Moore thrived on the football field for the Wildcats as he helped Louisburg to a 10-1 record and a regional championship. Moore was a first team All-Frontier League player on both sides of the ball and was the league's leading vote-getter. He went on to rack up all-state awards as the Louisburg senior earned Class 4A first team all-state honors as a running back from the Topeka Capital-Journal and the Kansas Football Coaches Association. Moore was also named as a Class 4A first team all-state linebacker from the Wichita Eagle.

When the season was all said and done, Moore tallied 1,554 total yards from the running back spot, including 1,428 yards on the ground, and had 21 touchdowns before he broke his collarbone during the regional championship game.

With those numbers, he was named the Kansas Small Class Player of the Year by 810 Varsity and was All-Purpose Player of the Year by Kpreps.com. Earlier this year, Moore was also named to the Kansas Shrine Bowl roster.

On the wrestling mat, Moore missed more than half of the season with his broken collarbone, but came back in a big way. Moore won his first 14 matches when coming back at 220 pounds, which included a regional championship. He went on to earn his first state medal as he finished fourth at the Class 4A state tournament with a 3-2 record. He was also named to the KWCA Academic All-State first team.

During the spring, he was a member of the Louisburg track and field team and threw the javelin for the Wildcats. He was also on the throwers relay that ranked Top 5 nationally at one point in the season.

Moore will join the Kansas State football team this fall.



KIEFER TUCKER – SENIOR – FOOTBALL, TRACK AND FIELD, WEIGHTLIFTING

Kiefer is a 2-sport letter winner in football and track and field and also went to state competition in two activities.

Tucker was a presence on the line of scrimmage for the Louisburg football team as he was a first team All-Frontier League player on both sides of the ball and helped the Wildcats to a 10-1 record and a regional championship.

The Louisburg senior was among on the leaders on the offensive line as he helped pave the way for more than 3,500 yards of total offense. On defense, Tucker recorded 55 tackles from the defensive end spot, including three tackles for a loss, three forced fumbles, a fumble recovery and a sack. Those numbers helped earn him honorable mention all-

state honors and was also named to the all-state team by the Kansas Football Coaches Association.

The honors kept coming for Tucker as he was recently selected to participate in the Kansas Shrine Bowl.

During the winter, Tucker was a member of the Louisburg powerlifting team and certainly made his mark there as well. Tucker won the Class 4A state championship in the 220-pound class and broke a 24-year-old record in the bench press with a lift of 375 pounds.

In track and field, Tucker qualified for state for the first time in the discus. He finished as a regional runner-up and went on to take ninth at the Class 4A state meet in Wichita, just one spot away from earning a state medal.

Tucker will join the Emporia State football team this fall.

Dixon excited for opportunity with U.S. Collegiate National Team



Kansas State freshman, and Louisburg graduate, Anna Dixon

sends a shot over the net during tryouts for the U.S. Women's Collegiate National Team in March in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Six months ago, Anna Dixon had just finished guiding the Louisburg High School volleyball team to its second consecutive state runner-up trophy.

Dixon was always one of – if not the best – player on the court whenever the Lady Cats took the floor.

Back in the present, Dixon has now positioned herself as one of the best players in the nation at the collegiate level. On April 1, it was announced Dixon was named to the U.S. Women's Collegiate National Team after having yet to play a game as a college player.

She was named to Anaheim National Team roster and Dixon will train and compete for five days in late June as the coaches will split up the 24 players on the roster.

"It is really exciting," Dixon said. "I honestly didn't expect anything to happen, but I was excited, especially that I can go with three of my other teammates and that we are in California."

Dixon, who graduated from Louisburg in December, joined the Kansas State volleyball program the next month and began training with her new teammates. The K-State coaches then gave Dixon the opportunity to try out for USA Volleyball in March in Colorado Springs, Colo.

So in early March, Dixon and some of her new Wildcat teammates made the journey and took part in the 3-day tryout at the U.S. Olympic Training Center.

Looking around the gym, Dixon was in disbelief at the different coaches and players she was competing against. The game was being played at a different level than she was used to, and it was a little stressful at times.

“We had two sessions the first day and three the second day,” Dixon said. “They usually evaluate you in one session and then regroup you with some other girls. Whenever I got moved up to the top group it was really nerve-racking because you are playing with All-Americans and girls who have been in the Final Four. The pace of the game was faster than I have ever played. They were really helpful with the adjustment.

“I got used to the pace after a while. I actually usually play better when I am nervous and that helped me a lot. At first it was hard, but I had to just trust my training.”

Trust it she did.

Dixon continued to impress her coaches with her play as an outside hitter. After the tryouts were over, and before the rosters were officially released, she actually earned a spot on a higher-level team.

USA Volleyball has four collegiate national teams with the top team that goes to compete in Italy and a second-tier team will journey to Japan. Dixon earned a spot on the No. 3 team that goes to Anaheim, but was originally selected for the Japan squad.

Due to a conflict with Kansas State, Dixon was unable to make the trip to Japan and was put on the Anaheim roster instead.

K-State is traveling to Brazil over the summer to compete against the Brazilian collegiate team, which overlapped with the Japan trip.

“The 20-and-under Italy team is basically the ‘A’ team for the collegiate national team so I made the second team that was going to Japan,” she said. “It was mostly girls who are juniors and seniors in college and there might be a couple sophomores. Japan would have been cool, and it was an honor be named that high, but I get to go to Brazil with my team and I am really excited about that. We will be there for two weeks and it should be a lot of fun.

“I like getting to experience different things in different areas. It has helped me meet a lot of people and build connections with them. My goal at the end of college is to go overseas and play volleyball, so I am excited about all these opportunities.”

Dixon hasn’t actually competed in an official event for USA Volleyball yet, but she is excited for the opportunity and what she has experienced so far.

“It was really cool,” she said. “I got a chance to meet a lot of the girls that I had been looking up to or watching on TV the last couple years, so being around them and playing with them was a great experience. We were playing with some of the best players in the country, and some former All-Americans, so it was cool to see how they learn and get to know them more.”

Dixon has been trying to get acclimated to her first semester in college and being a collegiate athlete. She has spent a lot of time training with the Wildcat team and hasn't had much free time to herself.

Working under the guidance of K-State head coach Suzie Fritz, Dixon has enjoyed her time in Manhattan so far and has learned a lot in just a few months time.

"It has been good," she said. "It was overwhelming at first. Every day I leave my house at about 6:15 in the morning and I won't get back until like 7 at night. The time management has been a huge adjustment, but my teammates have been really helpful and made it pretty easy."

As if playing on the collegiate national team wasn't enough, Dixon is currently waiting on a decision to see if she will earn a spot on the USA Junior National Team. The roster will be announced later this month.

If she earns a spot, Dixon will go to Colorado Springs for training and then will travel to Mexico to compete in the 2019 World Championships. Not too bad for a player who hasn't played an official collegiate match yet.

"It is a bigger deal for me because we will be playing teams from all over the world," Dixon said. "I am crossing my fingers that I will make it, but we will see."

Newly-formed boys volleyball team excited for home debut



Louisburg boys volleyball head coach Jeff Harris talks to his team during a practice Monday. The newly-formed Wildcat team will host Blue Valley and St. Thomas Aquinas in their home opener Wednesday at Louisburg Middle School.

When it comes to volleyball, it has been the girls that have dominated the court in Louisburg.

Success has been a staple of the Louisburg High School volleyball program as the Lady Cats have recorded numerous top 3 state finishes, including a pair of back-to-back state runner-up performances the last two years.

Now, there are a group of boys who want to get involved in the fun.

Eleven Louisburg students have joined together to create the town's first boys high school volleyball team. Louisburg is a member of the Kansas City High School Boys Volleyball League, which is in its inaugural season as several schools in the area want to create interest in having boys volleyball become a sanctioned sport within the Kansas State High School Activities Association.

"There are 26 teams right now in Kansas and Missouri," assistant coach Geoff Branine said. "Some of them have junior varsity programs involved so there are 21 schools involved and 26 teams. It was better than expected. We are pretty excited and Missouri doesn't have a big step to take to get it into the schools because St. Louis has several.

"The Heart of America Volleyball Association is trying to build boys volleyball in the region. In Minnesota, they started this club-type volleyball program two to three years ago and next year will be their first year of having it be a true varsity sport, which is awesome."

However, before they can get to that point, the Louisburg club team is trying to draw interest within the community and the Wildcats are already off to a good start.

Louisburg is currently 2-2 in league play as the Wildcats have played in two different triangualrs. The next one will come Wednesday when Louisburg will have its home opener at Louisburg Middle School.

Head coach Jeff Harris and Branine, who are are both Louisburg residents and former collegiate volleyball players, are excited for the opportunity to show what their players can do.

"It was slow starting out because they have never played together on the same team because of the mix of age groups," Harris said "We are coming together well and this will be our fifth match Wednesday and the boys look great right now.

"We have 11 on the team right now, four of which have never played before. They are all great athletes and are picking the game up very well.



Ben Rangel works on his serving during practice.

The Wildcats are made up of Louisburg High School and middle school students as the league can have seventh through 12th graders on their roster and the Wildcats are one of the youngest teams in the league. Their oldest player is a sophomore and they have eighth-graders that see a lot of playing time.

One of those players, Louisburg freshman Ben Ratliff-Becher, has played club volleyball for several years and is excited for the opportunity to compete with others from the same town.

"It is really fun, actually," Ratliff-Becher said. "There has only been volleyball for girls in Louisburg and there hasn't been much volleyball-wise for boys to do in Louisburg. Having a boys volleyball team is awesome and I think it opens doors for other high schools to do the same.

"I think probably about 80 percent of our team has played volleyball before, but it is also really fun to have those that haven't played at all. Watching them get better and better is so much fun."

Louisburg will host Blue Valley and St. Thomas Aquinas at 6 p.m. on Wednesday and the Wildcats want as many members of the community to come to Louisburg Middle School to see what they are about.

Free hot dogs will be provided thanks to Dixon Contracting Services and Prairie Shield Roofing until 7 p.m., and the Wildcats are doing all they can to try and get the word out.



Assistant coach Geoff Branine works with Isaiah Leonard on his serving technique Monday during the team's practice.

"It is going to be great," Harris said. "We have started Facebook pages, we are having a free barbecue and we are trying to do everything we can to draw a crowd to support the boys. We just want to spread the momentum for boys volleyball here. The girls program always has a great team and we just want to continue that tradition in Louisburg."

Although they know this is a process, the Wildcats hope this venture will help create an awareness for boys volleyball in the high school setting.

"Even after talking with the schools and other principals and such, it is just really about interest," Branine said. "As far as fitting into the school program, it could happen

pretty easily. They already have the gym, the nets, balls and the gym time is available in the spring because this is the time for boys volleyball. The only thing you have to worry about is pulling kids away from track and baseball when it turns into a school sport. We think there is interest and it could work."

Although that possibility is still a ways away, the Wildcats are focused on the task at hand and will try and get some revenge. Louisburg lost to St. Thomas Aquinas in three sets to begin the season and it is hope to avenge that tough loss in front of its home crowd.

"It will be so fun," Ratliff-Becher said. "I am excited. I think a lot of people are coming, so I am definitely proud of that. I think we are going to get Aquinas this time."

Members of the Louisburg team are Ben Rangel, Brett Rangel, Braden Branine, Jay Scollin, Bryce Gage, Wyatt Axmann, Ben Ratliff-Becher, Matthew Sword, Dawson Barnes, Isaiah Leonard and Jacob Sanders.

For more information on the new league, visit kcboysvb.org

Top 10 Stories of 2018



It was a successful, and eventful, 2018 for Louisburg High School athletics and for those who are connected to the Wildcat program. This past year created a lot of school history for LHS and several programs brought back state hardware to Louisburg.

Below are the Top 10 stories from 2018, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the explanation is the link to the actual story from the event.

This year was a blast to cover and I was blessed to have the opportunity to go along for the ride with many of these. As much fun as it was, I can't wait for 2019 to begin. Looking forward to it!



10. Dillon medals at state golf for second straight year

EMPORIA – All season, Calvin Dillon had been atop or near the front of leaderboard and that didn't change in what was his biggest tournament of the season.

The Louisburg High School sophomore went up against the state's best during the Class 4A state golf tournament on May 19 at the Emporia Municipal Course and did more than hold his own. Dillon earned a state medal as he finished 11th overall with a 3-over par 74.

It was the second consecutive state medal for Dillon after he finished 10th overall last season at Wamego as a freshman.

“It is a real honor to earn another state medal, especially with the quality players that were at

the state tournament," Dillon said. "There were lots of good players and lots of good teams."

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



Louisburg football coach Robert Ebenstein



Louisburg girls soccer coach Kyle Conley

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



8.

Holtzen finishes Louisburg career with 12 varsity letters

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

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

her letter jacket.

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

In research done by Louisburg Sports Zone, it was unable to find

the last athlete to accomplish the feat, which could mean Holtzen could be the first Lady Cat to do so. She competed in cross country, basketball and track and field

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

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

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



7.

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

Louisburg

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

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

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

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

Driel.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

It certainly wasn't

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

300 hurdles

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

She picked the perfect time to make it a fourth.

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

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

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

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

Isabelle Holtzen would go on to finish sixth in the pole vault, the boys 4x400 team of Chris Williams, Blue Caplinger, Ben Wiedenmann and Justin Collins went on to take seventh. Williams finished eighth in the 400-meter run and

Trent Martin medaled eighth in the boys pole vault.



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

HUTCHINSON – The feeling was much of the same.

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

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

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

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

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

“The loss was tough,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “To come so close to a state title two years in a row, only to come up short is tough. But with that being said, it is a huge accomplishment for this team to get back to the state championship and make it two years in a row. Finishing second is nothing to hang our heads on.

Last year’s finish fueled the fire for the team this year, and I challenged the returning players to use this loss and feeling to fuel them for next year.”

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



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

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

The Louisburg High School girls soccer team found itself in the

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

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

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

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

both games in its state tournament appearance and finished fourth.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

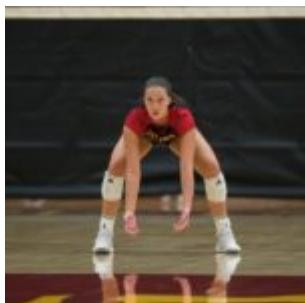
With all that success, honors started to roll in for its players as running backs Austin Moore and Blue Caplinger, along with linemen Brayden White and Kiefer Tucker all earned all-state honors.

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

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

Ebenstein was also named Kansas Small-Class Coach of the Year by 810 Varsity.

Dunn ends Pitt State career in record-setting fashion



Pittsburg State junior Lauren Dunn became the school record holder last month in service aces. Dunn, who is a Louisburg High School graduate, also earned All-MIAA honors.

PITTSBURG – Although it wasn't the year she was hoping for as a team, Lauren Dunn personally had a season to remember for the Pittsburg State volleyball program.

Dunn cemented her name in the Pittsburg State record books when she became the single season-record holder for service aces with 59 when the Gorillas squared off with Emporia State on Nov. 2. She would finish the year with 60 aces overall.

It was an impressive feat and Dunn, a 2016 Louisburg High School graduate, didn't have much of a clue that she was close to any kind of record.

"I was very surprised," Dunn said. "My coaches had kept it from me until it happened because they didn't want me to over think it. I honestly had no idea that was even a possibility."

As for the Gorillas themselves, they finished their season with an 18-13 record and a 7-11 mark in the MIAA. Dunn, a junior, served as a defensive specialist for Pittsburg State and led the team in a couple different categories.

Along with service aces, she also led the team with 456 digs and averaged 4.07 digs per set. She played in all 31 matches for the Gorillas, but that 31st match was her last as a collegiate volleyball player, despite having one more year of eligibility remaining.

"As for the future, I decided that nursing school needed to come first and I decided to end my volleyball career," Dunn said. "It was a very hard decision, but getting my nursing degree is very important to me."

Dunn certainly left the Pitt State program on a high note as she also received postseason honors for her performance. She was named to the All-MIAA honorable mention team as she led the MIAA in service aces and was ninth in the conference in digs per set.

Dunn was also recognized for her work in the classroom as she was recently named as an MIAA Scholar Athlete and to the MIAA Academic Honor Roll.

To qualify as a Scholar-Athlete an individual must have a grade point average used by the institution for purposes of NCAA academic certification of 3.50 at the certifying member institution. They must also have at least two terms of attendance at the certifying member institution, excluding summer terms. If competing in a championship sport of the MIAA, the student-athlete must earn All-MIAA honors.

The honors were great for Dunn to receive, but she would have

liked to play a little bit longer with her team.

“Our overall season was good, but the team had more room for improvement,” Dunn said. “We had a winning season, which hadn’t happened for a while, so that is good. Being mentioned as all-conference is a big honor. I’m glad my hard work paid off and it was awesome to be recognized.

“We were one seed away from making the conference tournament, which was a bit disappointing, but we knew that this was the best season we have had in a long time.”

Buffington, Dixon take part in all-star match



Louisburg seniors Carson Buffington (left) and Anna Dixon share a quick laugh during the small class match of the GKCVCA All-Star Match on Nov. 18 at Avila University.

Louisburg seniors Carson Buffington and Anna Dixon thought their days of playing volleyball together were over following the Lady Cats’ loss to Bishop Miege in the Class 4A state championship match last month.

It was difficult moment for both players to comprehend as they

have played on the Lady Cat varsity team together the last three seasons and their final match ended in defeat.

Instead, both girls received one more opportunity to take the court together one last time on Nov. 18 when they were chosen to participate in the 22nd Annual Greater Kansas City Volleyball Coaches Association MO-KAN All-Star Match.

Dixon and Buffington were selected to represent team Kansas in the small-class match at Avila University following their good performance in the 2018 season.



Carson Buffington records a kill during the small-class all-star match at Avila.

“It was really enjoyable, especially coming after state where Carson and I thought it was going to be the last time playing

with each other," Dixon said. "But having one more match with her, and with a lot of these other girls that we have been playing with since middle school, it was pretty fun."

The result didn't go as the two would have hoped. Kansas took the first set 25-20, but Missouri bounced back to win the match 25-20 and 25-21.

Despite the loss, it was still a great experience for both as they got a chance to team up with some of the best players in the Kansas City area.

"It felt good to get back out there one last time, even though I didn't know many of the girls," Buffington said. "It was still fun and it was a great opportunity. I was just really honored to be picked for this. It was pretty cool and it was great to be out there and joke around with Anna again."

Dixon provided Kansas with a spark in the first set with three kills and a block and she played all six rotations for much of the match. Buffington, who played as a right side hitter, also registered a pair of kills in the second set.



Senior Anna Dixon sends a shot over the net during the GKCVCA All-Star Match on Nov. 18.

Team Kansas was coached by Kathleen Rush, the head coach of Bishop Miege, and she ran a practice the day before the match to help the girls get acclimated to each other.

"Practice was a little rough and there were times where I felt like I haven't ever touched a volleyball before, but at the end I felt a lot more confident," Buffington said. "Then in the game I got a chance to talk to the girls and get to know them a little bit. It was a good experience."

Dixon agreed, as she came up against foes that she has competed against over the last several years from both sides of the state line.

"There were a lot of great athletes, especially ones that I

have come up against during the club season, so it was fun to play with and against a lot of them," she said.