

Lady Cats rally to knock off Blue Valley Southwest



Louisburg senior Mikayla Quinn tips the ball over the net Tuesday against Blue Valley Southwest at Louisburg High School. The Lady Cats defeated Southwest in five sets to improve its record to 5-1 on the season.

It hasn't even been a full week into the season, and it was just one win, but the Louisburg High School volleyball team got a big victory Tuesday against Blue Valley Southwest.

The win was important but the way the Lady Cats pulled it off could pay dividends for the rest of their season.

Down 2-1, and on the verge of elimination, the Lady Cats rallied to win the final two sets and defeat Blue Valley Southwest 25-20, 19-25, 23-25, 26-24 and 15-9 in Louisburg. It was a victory the Lady Cats hope gives them confidence later on in the season.

"Coming back down 1-2 to win the last two sets is huge," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "The fourth set was 26-24, so it wasn't easy, but the players battled to the end. We seemed to start each set strong but would hit a wall and start pulling back once Southwest made a few runs. That is something we'll need to work on as the season progresses – establishing mental toughness and persevering.

“We lost some energy during the second and third set which Blue Valley Southwest capitalized on. Overall, I was pleased with how the team rallied back, played together and finished the night.”

Louisburg senior Sophie McMullen guided the Lady Cats back from the brink of defeat to give them new life. McMullen recorded eight kills, three aces and a block in the fourth set alone to help the Lady Cats to the two-point win.

McMullen finished the match with 22 kills, 19 digs, nine aces and four blocks to lead Louisburg in a back-and-forth night.

“Sophie did a great job of making some big plays down the stretch that kept us in the match and helped us pull out the win,” Compliment said. “She had a few huge hits as well as some big serves. Our middles (Haley Cain and Mikayla Quinn) established themselves early in the match which helped all of the hitters stand a better chance for a split block or a one-on-one opportunity. Carson (Buffington) did a good job of moving the offense around to each of the hitters.”



Junior Anna Dixon goes up for a block Tuesday against Blue Valley Southwest.

Buffington had a good evening running the offense with 46 assists in the five sets and set up several teammates in the process.

Junior Anna Dixon had a team-high 30 kills to go along with four aces and six blocks. Cain finished with six kills and five blocks in the middle.

Defensively, Dixon added 16 digs to her line, while Buffington and sophomore libero Riley Kallevig added 10.

Louisburg (5-1) jumped out to a 12-4 lead in the first set and

kept the Timberwolves at arm's length to get off to a good start. Louisburg again got out quickly for a 5-1 lead in the second set, but Southwest stormed back to take the lead midway through the set and held on.

The Lady Cats held a 13-11 lead in the third, only to watch the Timberwolves come back again and capture the set.

Louisburg had to win the final two to pull off the comeback – and it did.

McMullen helped give Louisburg an early 5-1 lead after a pair of aces, and after Southwest tried to comeback again, McMullen responded with four kills and an ace to give Louisburg a 14-12 advantage.

The Timberwolvers eventually took a 17-16 lead, but a Quinn kill tied the match and the Lady Cats responded with a McMullen kill and an ace from Dixon to regain the lead at 19-17.

Blue Valley Southwest led 22-21 late, but a kill and a tip from McMullen gave the Lady Cats the advantage back and Louisburg held on thanks to a pair of Dixon kills that ended the set when it was tied at 24-all.

Louisburg used that momentum and left no doubt on who would take that deciding fifth set. The Lady Cats jumped out to an 11-3 lead thanks to three kills and an ace from Dixon and cruised from there.

The Lady Cats will try for another dual win tonight when it hosts Olathe South. Freshmen begins at 4:30 p.m., with junior varsity and varsity to follow.

Lady Cats finish third at league tournament



Louisburg junior Anna Dixon sends a kill past the outstretched arms of two Paola blockers Saturday during the Frontier League Tournament at Louisburg High School. Dixon and the Lady Cats finished third overall with a 4-1 record on the day.

The Louisburg High School volleyball team is considered one of the top teams in the Frontier League and its No. 3 state ranking is one of those reasons.

On Saturday during the Frontier League Tournament, the Lady Cats looked strong early as they didn't lose a set in pool play. However, it was one match that tripped them up.

Louisburg lost to Basehor-Linwood in the semifinals 25-22 and 26-24 and the Lady Cats were denied a spot in the championship match at Louisburg High School. The Lady Cats did end the day on a positive note as they ousted Spring Hill 25-14 and 25-18 to finish in third place.

De Soto cruised to win its second consecutive league tournament and didn't lose a set on the day.

"For the first go-round this season, I think we started stronger to start the day and I just think we had more energy in the morning," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "I think the girls were excited with the anticipation of getting

the season going and our energy level was higher in the first two matches. After that, I think we started to level off and play more comfortable and more timid.”

The Lady Cats (4-1) opened pool play the right way as they rolled Baldwin 25-14 and 25-11. Senior Sophie McMullen gave Louisburg the boost it needed from behind the service line as she recorded 11 aces between the two sets and also added five kills.

Junior Anna Dixon led the Lady Cats with nine kills and junior setter Carson Buffington tallied 18 assists to lead the Louisburg offense. Defensively, sophomore libero Riley Kallevig added three digs.

Louisburg didn't let up as it defeated Spring Hill 25-23 and 25-11 to earn its second pool play win behind 10 kills and six blocks from Dixon and five kills and five digs from McMullen. Kallevig and McMullen each had a pair of aces the win.



Sophomore Erin Lemke (left) and senior Mikayla Quinn rise up for a block Saturday against Spring Hill.

The Lady Cats got to exact some revenge in their final pool play match against Paola. The Panthers ended Louisburg's season a year ago, but the Lady Cats rallied to win the first set 25-17 and won the second 25-18 to finish pool play undefeated.

Dixon had nine kills to lead the Lady Cats in the winning effort. Louisburg also served well with nine aces, including four from Dixon and three from Kallevig. Buffington also had 16 assists in the win.

Basehor-Linwood proved to be a much tougher opponent for the Louisburg in the semifinals. The Lady Cats had to play from behind most of the match, but did rally late in the second set to try and force a deciding third, but couldn't overtake a pesky Bobcat team.

“Basehor has always been a scrappy team,” Compliment said. “We just kind of struggled getting around their blocks and coming together as a team. I think we just let them dominate us mentally more than anything on that front. We didn’t play together as well as we should have.”

Sophomore Haley Cain stepped up in the front row to lead Louisburg with seven kills, while McMullen and Dixon each finished with six.

Senior Mikayla Quinn added four kills and Buffington tallied 18 assists. McMullen led the Louisburg defense with six digs.



Haley Cain goes up for a kill in the semifinals

Saturday against Basehor-Linwood.

Louisburg responded well in its final match against Spring Hill and the Lady Cats didn't let that one loss bother them to come back and take third.

"I was proud of the way the girls responded by coming back and beating Spring Hill and finishing the day with a win," Compliment said. "It just wasn't the ending they had anticipated or wanted. There was still a lot of good things that happened. I was impressed with our serve receive and how Riley and Reilly (Ratliff-Becher) passed the ball. Also having Sophie back there as well just adds more consistency to our serve receive."

Kallevig had four aces to lead the Lady Cats behind the service line against Spring Hill and Dixon added three aces and eight kills. McMullen and Quinn finished up with six and five kills, respectively.

Buffington ended the day with 16 assists and Kallevig had a team-high six digs. McMullen and Ratliff-Becher each had four digs.



Louisburg players (clockwise from left) Erin Lemke (14), Carson Buffington, Sophie McMullen, Riley Kallevig and Anna Dixon celebrate a big point Saturday.

“I was proud of Carson and how she ran the offense,” Compliment said. “We changed the offense again this year to the 5-1 and she has done a good job. We have four sophomores out there at times, so we are still kind of young and it all about getting court time for them. Sophie and Anna both had some good runs there on the front row as did Mikayla, so we did some good things.”

Louisburg will try and continue its winning ways tonight when it hosts Blue Valley Southwest. The freshman team opens play at 4:30 p.m., with the junior varsity and varsity to follow.

A photo gallery from Saturday’s tournament can be found [here](#).

Photo Gallery: LHS Community Pep Rally



Louisburg drum major Chloe Philgreen directs the band during the Fall Community Pep Rally on Thursday at Louisburg High School.

Parents and students at Louisburg High School flooded the LHS gymnasium Thursday for the 20th Annual Community Pep Rally that was sponsored by First National Bank.

They were all provided with a free meal courtesy of First National and Chris Cakes, which was followed by the introduction of all the fall sports and activities. The LHS cheerleaders and Jazzy Cats performed routines, while the Wildcat band also performed musical numbers throughout the evening.

Below is a photo gallery from the event on what was a great way to kick off the school year.





First National Bank president Bob Nauman speaks to the crowd.



Scholar's Bowl coach Christine Staab talks about the team's upcoming season.



LHS FFA adviser Jim Morgan introduces his national team members.



Jazzy Cat coach Kassy Miller introduces her 2017-18 team.





New LHS cheer coach Dana Shaffer talks about the success of her team.









LHS cross country coach John Reece talks to the crowd about his team.





Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley introduces his squad.



LHS volleyball coach Jessica Compliment talks about her excitement for the upcoming season.



LHS seniors (from left) Mikayla Quinn, Sarah Wilson, Sophie McMullen and Ainsley Vance.



LHS debate and forensics coach Claire Haflich talks about her team.



New LHS football coach Robert Ebenstein speaks to the crowd.



Twirler Emalee Bigley, along with drum majors Mikayla Quinn, Chloe Philgreen and Shaylor Whitham were introduced to the crowd.



Louisburg band director John Cisetti talks to the crowd about the upcoming Rose Bowl Parade.





Louisburg volleyball ready to 'Believe the Hype'



Louisburg senior Sophie McMullen digs up a ball during a match last season. McMullen who earned first-team all-Frontier League honors along with junior teammate Anna Dixon, return to

Lead the Lady Cats.

The image is still planted in the minds of the Louisburg High School volleyball team.

It is a picture the Lady Cats haven't been able to shake almost 10 months later as they watched rival Paola celebrate a substate championship on their home floor after losing the match in two sets.

However, instead of letting that one match do more damage, the Lady Cats are trying to turn it into a positive. Louisburg, which opens its season Saturday when it hosts the Frontier League Tournament, wants to make sure it doesn't have that same sinking feeling at the end of this year.

"I think it has motivated us a lot, especially seeing teams ahead of us go to state," junior Anna Dixon said. "We were super motivated going into that game, but the loss I think really hit us hard. Our new motto this year is 'Believe the Hype.' I really think this is going to be our bounce back year and I think that we are ready to go."

That new motto is something Louisburg head coach Jessica Compliment believes will give her team confidence – something that wasn't there at times last season.

"Louisburg volleyball has a long standing tradition of being a strong athletic program," Compliment said. "League championships, state qualifying teams and state rankings date all the way back to the 1970s. Wearing a Louisburg uniform is something that should bring pride to the athlete because they are part of a program with a rich history and a program with recent successes.

"'Believe the Hype' hopefully brings confidence to the athletes that they are deserving of wearing that uniform. Last

year I think we were missing that confidence. We didn't quite believe that we could beat or play with anyone if we put our mind to it and worked together as a team."

People around the state are starting to "Believe the Hype" as well as the Kansas Volleyball Coaches Association tabbed the Lady Cats as the No. 3 team in Class 4A-Division I in its preseason rankings, just below No. 1 Rose Hill and No. 2 Bishop Miege.

Louisburg returns six players that saw starting time at one point or another last year during its 23-17 season. Dixon and senior Sophie McMullen return to lead the Lady Cats as both players earned all-Frontier League first team honors in 2016.

Dixon, a Kansas State commit, led the Lady Cats as a sophomore with more than 500 kills and 160 blocks. McMullen, a Northwest Missouri State commit, still had a strong season despite missing some of the year with an injury. She had a team-high 58 aces on the year and had nearly 300 kills to go along with more than 200 digs and assists.

"It's always nice to have seasoned players returning," Compliment said of Dixon and McMullen. "They both have a lot of experience, and I'll be looking to them to lead the team. Sophie is a versatile player and has experience playing every position. It will be a different position for her on our team, but it's a position she's confident and comfortable playing."



Setter Carson Buffington (middle) returns and will help set up Haley Cain (left), Anna Dixon and the rest of her teammates.

McMullen, who was the team's full-time setter her first two seasons, shared setting duties last season with Carson Buffington. Now heading into this year, McMullen will serve as an all-around player as the setting duties will fall to Buffington.

Louisburg will revert back to a 5-1 offense, which have just one setter and it will give Buffington that role full-time after a good season as a sophomore.

"This year we have a little more of that chemistry that maybe a new team wouldn't have," McMullen said. "I think we are all used to each other now. Anna can hit off Carson, I can hit off

Carson and Carson is used to our passes now. I think it all kind of clicks more now than it did when we had new players last year.

“I am excited about the new position because that is what I will be doing in college. I miss setting, because that was my favorite, but I really love to hit and pass just as much.”

Sophomore Haley Cain and senior Mikayla Quinn also return after having big roles on the Lady Cats a season ago as both players will play on the front row, along with sophomore Erin Lemke and senior Sarah Wilson, who will move up to the varsity level.

Defensively, sophomore Riley Kallevig returns as the team’s libero and fellow sophomore Reilly Ratliff-Becher has also moved up to varsity in the defensive rotation with senior Ainsley Vance.

“Despite having six returning starters, I feel like we are still a young team,” Compliment said. “We are taking each day at a time, and making the most of each practice. The team is focused on getting better each day and each match at a time. The team has their sight set on winning league and qualifying for state, but they also understand that nothing will come easy. We have a tough schedule but one that will help prepare us for post season.”

Their schedule may be tough, but the Lady Cats will get to play a bulk of their games on their home floor. Louisburg will host two tournaments this season to go along with eight duals, a triangular and a quadrangular.

The Lady Cats have just five away dates on their schedule and they hope it gives them an advantage throughout the season.

“It is awesome,” Dixon said of the home schedule. “Last year I really think our crowd stepped up a lot and they made a huge difference in a lot of our wins because the game is so mental.

A big crowd can be a difference, so hopefully that can give us a couple more wins.”

Louisburg starts its home schedule Saturday when it hosts the Frontier League Tournament. Pool play will begin at 8 a.m. and the Lady Cats will start play at the high school.

The top two teams in each pool will advance to the championship bracket later in the day.

The Lady Cats open play against Baldwin to start off, followed by matches against Spring Hill and Paola to end the pool. De Soto, Eudora, Ottawa and Basehor-Linwood will compete in pool play at the middle school.

Lady Cats ranked toward top of state volleyball rankings



Being toward the top of the state rankings isn't anything new for the Louisburg High School volleyball team.

The Lady Cats have been among the top teams in the state for the last five seasons as they earned a trip to the state tournament four of the last five years.

If the coaches have anything to say about it, Louisburg will be right in the thick of it again this season. The Lady Cats

are ranked No. 3 in Class 4A-Division 1 according to the latest rankings put out by the Kansas Volleyball Coaches Association. Rose Hill is ranked No. 1 in the state, followed by Bishop Miege at No. 2.

Louisburg opens its season Saturday when it hosts the Frontier League Tournament. Pool play matches are set to begin at 8 a.m.

Check out how the rest of the teams across the state are ranked below.

Class 4A – Division 1

1. Rose Hill
2. Bishop Miege
- 3. Louisburg**
4. Andover Central
5. Abilene
6. Paola
7. McPherson
8. Kansas City-Piper
9. Maize South
10. Ulysses

Class 6A

1. Olathe Northwest
2. Blue Valley West
3. Blue Valley Northwest
4. Manhattan
5. Lawrence-Free State
6. Blue Valley
7. Gardner-Edgerton
8. Blue Valley Northwest
9. Olathe North
10. Olathe East

Class 5A

1. Shawnee Heights
2. St. James Academy
3. St. Thomas Aquinas
4. Lansing
5. Newton
6. Goddard-Eisenhower
7. Kapaun Mt. Carmel
8. Maize
9. De Soto
10. Emporia

Class 4A – Division 2

1. Topeka-Hayden
2. Nickerson
3. Concordia
4. Baxter Springs
5. Andale
6. Santa Fe Trail
7. Girard
8. Wichita Trinity Academy
9. Holcomb
10. Holton

Class 3A

1. Hesston
2. Thomas More Prep-Marian
3. Silver Lake
4. Cheney
5. Kingman
6. Douglass
7. Nemaha Central
8. Wellsville
9. Humboldt
10. St. Marys

Class 2A

1. Heritage Christian
2. Central Plains
3. Republic County
4. Kiowa County
5. Valley Falls
6. Jefferson County North
7. St. Mary's Colgan
8. Flinthills
9. Oswego
10. Maranatha Academy

Class 1A – Division 1

1. Centralia
2. Goessel
3. Hanover
4. South Central
5. South Barber
6. Beloit-St. John's/Tipton
7. Stockton
8. La Crosse
9. Olpe
10. Rural Vista

Class 1A – Division 2

1. Northern Valley
2. Sylvan-Lucas
3. Wheatland-Grinnell
4. Otis-Bison
5. Axtell
6. Blue Valley-Randolph
7. Wallace County
8. Cunningham
9. Waverly
10. Fowler

Fall sports season kicks off with first day of practice



Louisburg senior Kris Light goes through a drill during the first day of soccer practice Monday. All four Wildcat teams got their season started with workouts on Monday as the fall sports season kicks off.

Summer time and vacations are coming to an end just in time for fall sports to heat up as four Louisburg High School teams had their first day of practice Monday.

The Wildcat cross country, football, soccer and volleyball teams got the 2017 season kicked off right with either two-a-days or tryouts. Each program also had strong numbers out as they either increased or stayed the same from the year before.

All four Louisburg teams experienced success last season and they hope it carries over into this year.

Louisburg soccer made program history as the Wildcats advanced to the state semifinals for the first time. Cross country also had a big season as it qualified three for the state meet.

Football is coming off a regional championship, while the volleyball team was one victory away from reaching the state

tournament.

Louisburg had a lot of positives going its way in 2016, but all four coaches realize it is time to start anew.

The Wildcat football team opened practice with approximately 60 players out as they start two-a-days for the rest of this week under first-year coach Robert Ebenstein. The players will practice in helmets and shoulder pads through Thursday and full pads Friday. They will conclude the week with a scrimmage Saturday morning.



Louisburg junior Austin Moore and the rest of the Wildcat football team begin two-a-day practices this week.

Louisburg, which finished with eight wins last season, is hoping build on that success.

“I thought practice went well,” Ebenstein said. “The guys and

coaches were excited to get going and the guys brought a ton of enthusiasm and had a great first day of practice.”

The Wildcat soccer team saw a big jump in numbers as they had 45 players sign up to play this season and the team will be going through tryouts through Wednesday.

Practice opened at the track as the players ran the mile at 7 a.m. Monday, watched a concussion video in the afternoon and hit the practice field for the first time shortly after. The Wildcats are hard at work under second-year coach Kyle Conley, making sure they use the momentum they created after their fourth place finish at state last season.

“I know for the boys and coaches it is fantastic to get back to the field,” Conley said. “We are very excited and anxious to prove last year was not a fluke. We will have to work even harder than we did last year, because we will not be able to fly under the radar. The boys are ready for that challenge and I think they are going to give it their all to see how this journey transpires. The boys are focused and determined. I am really excited to also see what this group can achieve as a team.”



Sophomore Trinity Moore is one of three returning state qualifiers for the Louisburg cross country team.

The cross country team also has high expectations for itself as the Wildcats return three state qualifiers in seniors Wyatt Reece, Tim Smith and sophomore Trinity Moore. Moore garnered a state medal after finishing 19th as a freshman at the Class 4A meet and became the first female runner in Louisburg history to earn a state honor.

Runners hit the streets around town on Monday for a 30-minute workout to begin to build their base for the season and will progress as the season goes along. Head coach John Reece has 35 runners out this season, which is close to last year's number, as the Wildcats prepare for what they hope is a special season.

"My summer crew of runners are excited to get going, some even started altering their summer runs on their own to start

preparing for the season,” coach Reece said. “We are working on duration runs vs. miles. Instead of going for a 5-mile run, I will have them run for a minimum of say 45 minutes and allow some to extend up to 60 minutes of training, which some runners could reach close to eight miles within the hour. Our non-duration days will be focused on speed and lots of repeats with active recovery. There will be no walking for us.”

The Lady Cat volleyball team felt out of place at the end of last season. Louisburg’s year ended sooner than it would have liked after losing in the substate championship game and didn’t qualify for state for the first time in five years.



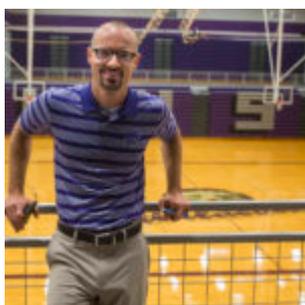
Louisburg senior Sophie McMullen goes through a drill during the first day of tryouts Monday at Louisburg High School.

Louisburg is hard at work in hopes of earning a state tournament bid. Head coach Jessica Compliment has 35 players out this season, and after two more days of tryouts, will get practice in full swing.

The Lady Cats open their season at home on Aug. 26 when they host the Frontier League preseason tournament and the junior varsity will compete in Paola. All three teams will play again at home on Aug. 29 against Blue Valley Southwest.

“The coaching staff is excited to get the season started and begin preparing for the preseason league tournament for varsity and junior varsity,” Compliment said. “We are looking forward to a lot of home matches this season and the athletes were ready to start tryouts and get the season kicked off.”

Holloway excited for new role as LHS activities director



Louisburg High School activities director Jeremy Holloway is looking forward to his new position as he starts his 17th year in the USD 416 school district.

Growing up, Jeremy Holloway wasn't one to stay in a place for too long.

Holloway spent most of his childhood and young adult life moving from place to place. He wasn't the type of person who envisioned himself putting down roots.

"I was a constant migrant," Holloway said.

That was until he moved to Louisburg with his wife Megan. Now instead of a migrant, Holloway is deep-rooted in a town he loves.

It made his decision, almost two months ago, an easy one.

Back in June, Holloway was hired as the new Louisburg High School activities director and assistant principal, following the resignation of former activities director Darin Gagnebin. Holloway, who has spent the last 16 years as a teacher at Louisburg Middle School, is ready for the new challenge.

"I am really looking forward to it," Holloway said. "I have been here in Louisburg for 17 years. I never lived anywhere for more than four years in my life until I came to Louisburg. I never knew what it was like to be a part of a community and when I got here I just fell in love with the town. I was excited to become a part of it and Louisburg became important to me. The teaching was great and getting to know all the kids and see them grow up all the way through college was fun. Now I see some of my former students teaching in the building here and it is an amazing feeling. It just felt like home to me."

Fate seemed to step in at the right time for Holloway. He entered the summer still planning to teach history at the middle school, but the dominoes quickly started to fall into place.

Holloway was well on his way to getting his administration

degree this past school year as he was planning on holding on to it until something in Louisburg came open. He didn't have to wait long.

"I had to get recertified, so I talked with my wife and I said why get an education masters if it is just going to move me on the pay scale," he said. "Why not get an administration degree to have options? There are other places near here that are looking for people, but that isn't what I want. The only move I would make is to stay in Louisburg. I happened to be down in Eureka Springs on vacation and I got a text in middle of night that Gagnebin had resigned. I had just got my diploma the day before we left. I applied and it turned out well and hopefully it was a good thing."

Louisburg USD 416 superintendent Dr. Brian Biermann had to sift through more than 20 different applicants for the job, but he believes Holloway is going to do great things in the position.

"Jeremy has been a loyal and dedicated teacher and coach in our community for 17 years," Dr. Biermann said. "Jeremy possesses many strong leadership attributes that will allow him to be a strong, instructional leader at Louisburg High School. He is passionate about education, has a strong work ethic and is committed to our community.

"Jeremy is all about building positive relationships with students, staff and the community. For 17 years he has been building these relationships. Now, he will be able to build upon his unique skill set in a leadership position in our district. I am excited to see the great things Mr. Holloway can contribute to our district and community in this new role."

One of the first things Holloway wanted to do was to get to know his new coaching staff. Several new coaches were hired this past school year and he wanted to see what they were all

about.

“I just want them to feel comfortable with me and let them understand that I am approachable,” Holloway said. “That relationship piece is huge. I am getting to know where they are from, how many kids they have and I want them to feel comfortable coming to me. We do lose some great experience, but we have gained some capable coaches and a lot of enthusiasm. I just want to be a positive impact for them.”

Since he started officially on July 24, Holloway has been hard at work in several different areas, but one of the bigger things going on now is the shuffling of the Frontier League.

The league, which will be at seven schools this year, will move up to nine starting for the 2018-19 school year. Bonner Springs, Tonganoxie and Piper will join the league, while De Soto will depart.

Baldwin, an original league member, is concerned the school will move down to Class 3A starting in 2018-19, thanks to changes in the classification system. If it happens, it will create scheduling conflicts for football.

“The biggest conflict right now is Baldwin is right on the edge of becoming 3A and they think it will happen,” Holloway said. “If Baldwin is in our league, which is what we plan on, they are required to play five district games for football, which only leaves them three league games. If only three league teams play Baldwin, then the rest of the league teams have to find another team to play. I have schools from Lansing, Independence, Coffeyville, Chanute and other schools calling me trying to lock up games. There are so many different scenarios so we just have to wait and see. That is one thing that I am really working on right now.”

With the activity season fast approaching, Holloway is excited for everything to get underway. He is also looking forward to getting to know the fan base more.

“I have always been highly impressed of Louisburg and the support of its teams and the turnout we will get, especially for football games,” Holloway said. “I encourage Louisburg to continue the tradition of being a class act. I think that every town has its own culture and a lot of it starts with the coaches. If your coaches are harassing refs, your players are probably going to start to learn that they can do that and that will trickle down to the parents and crowd. Without pointing fingers, there are certain places where that is the climate. I think Louisburg has been great. There are always going to be situations, but I would encourage fans and parents to support our coaches and let them coach.

“I am looking forward to an exciting year. We have great coaches, that are experienced and they are very innovative. They are organized and they all seem truly excited about what is going on. The community can rest assured that the coaches that are in place right now have the best interest of the kids and the programs.”

Lady Cats see improvement after team, KU camp



Louisburg High School sophomore Riley Kallevig works on a passing drill during the Lady Cat team camp on July 13. The Lady Cats completed a busy summer that included a trip to the

University of Kansas team camp.

The Louisburg High School volleyball team was just a match away from earning a spot at another state tournament last season.

The Lady Cats, which had won four straight substate championships before their loss to rival Paola in the substate title game last year, have been busy at work all summer in hopes of making sure they don't fall short this time around. Whether it was at their team camp, summer workouts or in the weight room, they are ready to make another run at the state tournament.

It all started in June with open gyms and summer league action, followed up with its three-day camp that ended on July 12. Louisburg had approximately 38 girls out during the camp and 35 more during the middle school session earlier in the day.

"Overall camp week went well," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "We are able to work on skills throughout the summer at open gym, but the three day camp gave us a chance to consolidate and concentrate on more specific skills and aspects of the game that we wanted to focus on. Because we have three groups playing weekly during the summer, we were able to focus on game scenarios that showed up during our matches."

Despite the strong workouts, Compliment wasn't able to get her full team together much throughout the summer, but it all changed when the Lady Cats traveled to the University of Kansas team camp that began on July 13.

Compliment took 22 players to the KU camp for three days and she got a chance to see her team all together for the first time and she liked what she saw.

“Summers can be very busy so the KU camp was the first time we had consistency among players, so I was able to work through a few potential rotations,” Compliment said. “By the end of the camp, the players were playing really well together and pulled off some big wins during the tournament. Hopefully the momentum and confidence from the KU camp will carry through to the season.”



Louisburg head coach Jessica Compliment gives some instruction during the Lady Cats’ team camp on July 13.

Each player got instruction from the Jayhawk coaches during their time in Lawrence and she saw her team take a big leap forward.

“They focused on team ‘practices’ and scrimmaged each evening giving the athletes a lot of court time and touches on the ball,” Compliment said. “It also gave them a chance to work

with the KU coaching staff and practice with a variety of teams. Both of the 'teams' that traveled to KU saw big improvements from day 1 to day 3. It was a long week for those athletes, but they saw improvements and had a chance to bond. Between the three 'teams' for summer league, we had 36 participants and each 'team' saw improvement from the first match of the summer to the last match."

The Lady Cats return most of their varsity roster from a season ago from a team that finished with a 23-17 record and featured a difficult schedule against a number of bigger schools.

Louisburg returns its top two hitters in Anna Dixon (Kansas State commit) and Sophie McMullen (Northwest Missouri State commit), along with setter Carson Buffington, hitters Haley Cain, Mikayla Quinn and libero Riley Kallevig as a good foundation to build on after all six players saw varsity time last season.

The Lady Cats are anxious to see what this coming year brings when they start practice on Aug. 14.

"We have a lot of work to do once the season starts, but I think the athletes are excited and ready to get the season underway," Compliment said.

Opinion: Time to look back and enjoy successes



The Louisburg High School football team was one of many bright spots for LHS athletics this past school year.

We live in a world where, especially in sports, we often don't take time to reflect on our accomplishments – and instead we are in a rush to move on to the next set of obstacles.

In reality, we are in a “what have you done for me lately” society and sometimes don't remember, or enjoy, those special moments where our hard work has paid off.

Yes, I understand you don't want to relish in those accomplishments as that doesn't make you a better athlete, or whatever your specialty may be, but not taking the time to enjoy the ride can be detrimental.

And what a ride it was for Louisburg High School athletics this past season.

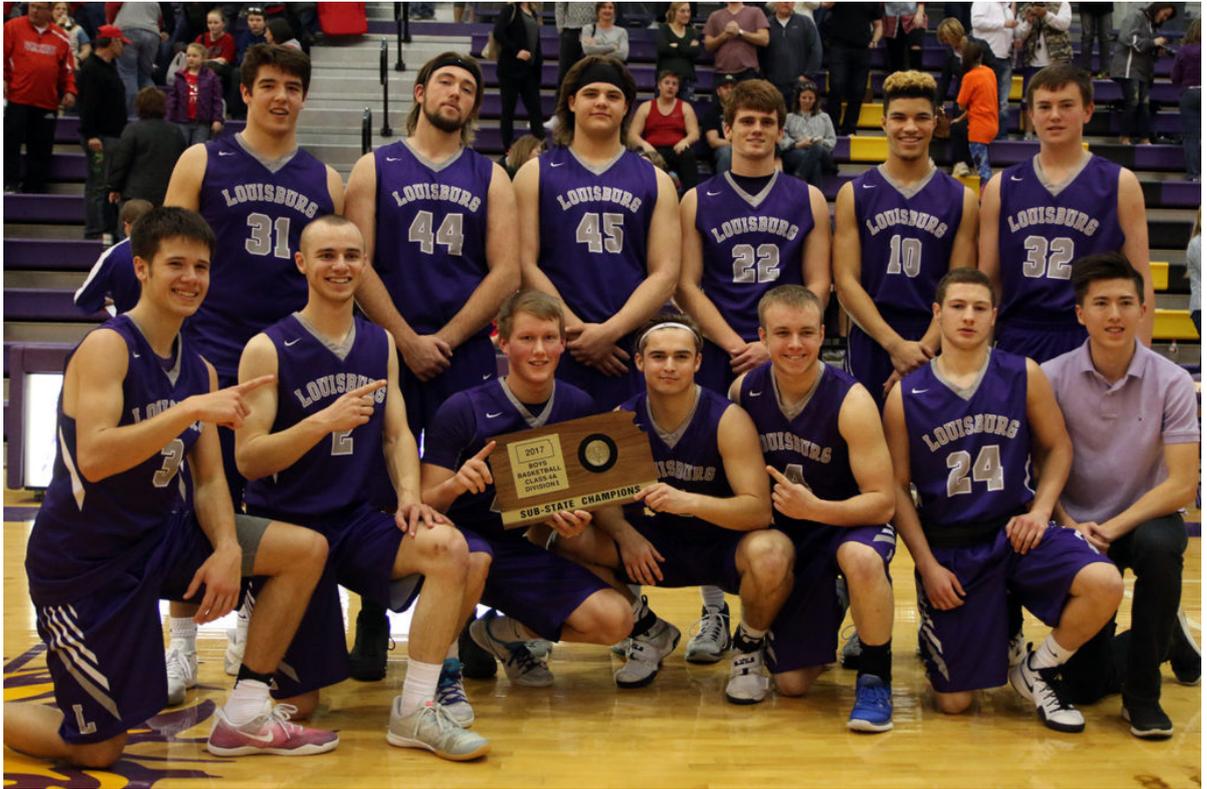
The Wildcats had a special year in several sports, and before we focus on the 2017-18 campaign, we should look back at what the 16-17 season brought us. Just take a look at what these Wildcats accomplished.

- There is probably no better place to start than the Louisburg soccer teams. Both the boys and girls teams earned spots in the state semifinals for the first time in program history and both finished fourth. The boys team made it to state for the first time in their 14 years, while the girls advanced to the state tournament in just their second season.



The Louisburg High School girls soccer team finished fourth in the state in just their second season. The Wildcat boys also finished fourth as they advanced to the state semifinals for the first time in program history.

- It was quite the season for the Wildcat boys basketball team as they advanced to the state tournament for the first time since 2005. Louisburg won its sub-state tournament with a 64-52 win over Fort Scott in the championship game.



The Louisburg boys basketball team qualified for state for the first time since 2005.

- The Louisburg football team made quite the run in the 2016 season. The Wildcats won their first playoff game since 2012 and earned a regional title in the process with a win over Independence. Even though their season came to an end in the next round to eventual state champion Bishop Miege, the Wildcats' still finished with an 8-3 record.
- Wrestling had another big season as the Wildcats qualified eight for the Class 4A state tournament in Salina. Although Ryan Adams was the lone state medalist, as he finished sixth overall at 138 pounds, the Wildcats tied a school record for number of state qualifiers that was set back in 1984.
- In cross country, the Wildcats sent three runners to the state meet and had their first state medalist since 2006 when freshman Trinity Moore finished 19th overall, as she, Wyatt Reece and Tim Smith competed at the Wamego meet. Moore was also the school's first female runner to earn a state medal.

- Freshman golfer Calvin Dillon became the Wildcats' first state medalist in several years as he finished 10th at the Class 4A state tournament and was one of two Wildcats, along with Ty Martin, to qualify for state. Dillon could quite possibly be the first freshman golfer in school history to get a medal, but since golf stats aren't quite as well kept, it is hard to tell for sure.
- T.J. Dover and Isabelle Holtzen came through with state medals of their own following the state track meet. Holtzen finished seventh at the Class 4A meet in the pole vault and Dover was eighth in the discus as both medaled for the first time. Holtzen also broke the school record in the pole vault earlier in the season after she cleared 11 feet, 1 inch.
- The girls basketball and softball teams both had big improvements from a season ago as they each reached 10 wins despite falling in the first round of their sub-state and regional tournaments. Softball doubled their win total from 2016, while the girls basketball team improved by seven victories.
- The Louisburg volleyball team advanced to the sub-state championship game against rival Paola and was just a few points away from advancing to its fifth consecutive state tournament. The Lady Cats also finished the season with 23 victories.

Most schools across the state would love to have the kind of success Louisburg experienced this year and to me that doesn't seem like it is talked about enough.

Sometimes we get caught up in losses or not meeting expectations, when in fact, compared to a lot of schools, Louisburg exceeds expectations – at least it does mine.

Could these programs be better? Sure they could and the coaches would be the first to tell you. At the same time, we all need to take a step back, look at the big picture and enjoy the success we have.

To me, Louisburg athletics is as healthy as it has been in a long time.

A lot has been made about all the coaches that have left recently. Louisburg will have four new head coaches this upcoming school year and several new assistants.

Some people have considered this a mass exodus due problems at the school. It couldn't be further from the truth. A lot of it is just coincidence. For some it was retirement, others wanted to spend more time with family and a few more just wanted a change.

Former activities director Darin Gagenbin left to be closer to his family and work in the town where he lives. I know all about how great of an opportunity that is and it is the same thing I did almost 10 years ago when I moved here with my family. Working in the town you live in is something you can't put a value on.

Louisburg found a great replacement in Jeremy Holloway, who has been with the district for 17 years and is invested in the community. The school has also brought in a lot of new, young coaches that have come in with excitement and new ideas.

It is bittersweet for me as a lot of those coaches I had a chance to get to know really well are now gone. Although I am mainly a solo operation, I consider a lot of them my co-workers and it stinks to see them move on, but I also know they are doing the best for themselves and their families.

The same could be said for the class of 2017. The group of seniors I worked with this past year were great to get to know, just like all the senior classes before them.

I appreciated all their support and what I do could not be done without those kids. It is great to see them grow up and watch them become successful outside the classroom. I am not a teacher or coach, but still appreciate all they accomplish.

With 2016-17 in the rear view mirror, it will soon be time to focus on the upcoming season and I couldn't be more excited to see what accomplishments this group of Wildcats have in store. It has all the makings of a fun and special year.

Gagnebin steps down as LHS activities director



Louisburg High School activities director Darin Gagnebin presents the Wildcat girls soccer team with their regional championship trophy last month. Gagnebin resigned his post earlier this month to take a similar position in Paola.

Darin Gagnebin has a fondness for Louisburg High School, his coaches and students.

That made it all the more hard to say goodbye.

Gagnebin resigned his post as LHS assistant principal and activities director earlier this month to tentatively take the same position at Paola High School. His last day in Louisburg was last week.

Gagnebin spent a total of 17 years in the Louisburg school

district, with the last six spent as activities director. He was also a teacher and coach for 11 years.

Family was the biggest reason he decided to make the move. Gagnebin and his family currently reside in Paola and his two children attend schools in Paola.

“People have come and gone, but it is still family here,” Gagnebin said. “I am comfortable here and Louisburg has done a lot for me. I just can’t pass up an opportunity to be where my kids are at. I know I could have brought my kids here, but my wife and I made that decision a long time ago of where we were going to live because of where she taught and I taught. I never thought back when we first moved to Paola and when we had kids, that we would be in this position.”

It was a difficult decision for Gagnebin as he leaves behind a group of coaches, several of whom he recently hired. The Louisburg district had a number of new coaches come on board for the upcoming school year.

“We have gone through some trials in the last couple of years and that is with any school,” Gagnebin said. “I told my wife, that if this was going to happen the way it did and I could pick the time, I wish the timing would have happened two years down the road. I would have loved to see what this young group of teachers and coaches are going to do coming in.

“I told my wife that I was really excited about coming back next year and I felt we made some good hires. We have a passionate coaching staff coming on and they are great people with new ideas. It just happened out of the blue.”

The opening came when former Paola High School principal Phil Bressler took the new principal job at Pittsburg High School. Paola assistant principal and activities director Jeff Hines was elevated to the Paola principal position, which left the Panthers needing an activities director.

It can be traced back even further when the Pittsburg High School journalism class wrote an investigative piece that ousted its newly hired principal, which forced the school to reopen the position and eventually hired Bressler.

“Had Pittsburg’s journalism class not done their job, we wouldn’t be sitting here talking right now,” Gagnebin said.

The Paola position was an opportunity Gagnebin just couldn’t pass up as he will have an opportunity to watch more of his children’s events and work closer to home.

“I have missed a lot of my own kids’ stuff,” he said. “But the people here have been really great, (Principal) Tammy (Thomasson) now and Dave (Tappan) before her, to let me try to get to as much stuff as I can. I still miss things. These opportunities don’t come around very often and I just figured this would be a great fit for me and my family.

“But I couldn’t ask for a better group of coaches here in Louisburg. They are good and passionate about what they do. I really have developed some good bonds over the years. I know some have left and some have stayed on, but the coaches and staff I have had has been great.”