

Louisburg volleyball reloads following big season



Junior Sophie McMullen (left) sets up teammate Olivia Bradley during the state tournament last season. McMullen, Bradley and Anna Dixon are the three returning varsity players that return from last year's third-place team at state.

Five out of the last six years, the Louisburg High School volleyball team has seen its season come to a close at the Class 4A-Division I Tournament in Salina.

Not a bad place for it to end.

However, this season the Lady Cats will have a different look to as they graduated five varsity players off last season's team that finished third at state. It is not exactly a recipe to return to a state tournament, but three players are looking to lead the way to make sure they make another trip to Salina.

Senior Olivia Bradley (middle blocker), junior Sophie McMullen (setter) and sophomore Anna Dixon (outside hitter) return with varsity experience as head coach Jessica Compliment tries to mold the team around them – a team that has won three Frontier League titles in a row.

“We did lose a large chunk of our team from last year, so we have a lot of rebuilding to do,” Compliment said. “Not only did we lose five starters, but three of those players started

for the past three years so we also lost a lot of experience. Sophie is returning with the most varsity experience having two years of varsity under her belt.



Sophomore Anna Dixon returns as one of the Lady Cats' top hitters after earning all-league honors last season.

“She, along with Anna and Olivia, will need to step up this year and use their varsity experience to help lead the team. We have a young group of players who are thirsty to learn and ready for the challenge.”

The Lady Cats, who finished with a 31-12 record a year ago, will not only have a different look roster-wise, but will have a different offense as well.

Louisburg plans to run a 6-2 offense, which would split the setting duties between McMullen and sophomore Carson Buffington and allow McMullen to hit some on the front row. McMullen, who was an honorable mention all-league setter in 2015, has started in that spot the last two seasons.

"I think it gives us the best chance to be competitive in all six rotations," Compliment said." I stress to the players at a young age to not settle in to just one position early because a versatile player can be very vital to a team. We have a few players that can play multiple positions and play them well. Sophie is one of those athletes. Sophie has a lot of experience at both setting and hitting. I'm excited to see what she brings to the team and season this year."

Whether it is Buffington or McMullen, both setters will look to get Dixon involved in the offense. Dixon earned second-team all-Frontier League honors as a freshman and was second on the team last season with more than 300 kills and also had 59 aces.

Dixon will be joined by junior Mikayla Quinn, who will hit on the right side, and Bradley in the middle.

"I've seen a growth of maturity from Anna so far this season, and I expect her to have another good year," Compliment said. "She'll need to use some of her experience to help lead the team as well."

Bradley will join Ellie Katzer and Tayler Lancaster – a transfer from Drexel, Mo. – as the lone seniors this season and both Katzer and Lancaster look to see time on the back row.

The Lady Cats will also feature a few new players, although the names might not be all that new. Freshmen Haley Cain and Riley Kallevig will also play big parts in Louisburg's rotation.

Kallevig will serve as the team's libero and will take over the same spot as her sister Makenzie, who was a senior last season. Cain also earned a spot as the team's middle hitter.

Compliment hopes the two freshmen and Quinn can help fill some holes left by last season's graduating class.

“We’ll look to Mikayla to be a strong front row player both offensively and defensively,” Compliment said. “Haley and Riley are two freshmen who are also starting this year. They both put in a lot of work over the summer and earned their way to a starting position during tryouts.”

Louisburg won’t have to wait too long to get going as it opens its season Saturday when the Lady Cats travel to Baldwin for the Preseason Frontier League Tournament. Pool play is set to begin at 8 a.m.

“We are a mix of a young and veteran team this season so there may be some growing pains along the way,” Compliment said. “We’ll take each match each week and learn and grow from each experience. Hopefully by the end of the season we will be playing at the top of the game and competing to finish out another league title and a chance to compete at state. Half of the team made the trip to state last year, so they do understand the work that goes behind reaching that goal.

“Each year the players understand that the stakes get higher and that they need to continue to work to get better. We cannot become complacent and just expect wins to happen. We have to work harder than the other teams.”

Numbers are up for LHS fall sports



After making the playoffs a season ago, the Louisburg High School football watched its number rise by a small number as they try to improve off of its 7-3 season in 2015. The Wildcats hold a scrimmage at 8 a.m., on Saturday.

A week into the fall sports season, all of the Louisburg High School sports teams have seen their participation numbers rise from last year – albeit by a small number.

It would make sense as all four programs made strides in the 2015-16 campaign. The football team returned to the playoffs after a 3-win season the year before and volleyball placed third at the state tournament.

Boys soccer won its first regional title in five years despite a rough beginning. Meanwhile, cross country qualified a runner for the state meet for the first time in several years and the girls team made program history when it won its first ever meet.

Needless to say, last year's results have left several excited for what is to come in all sports.



Sophie McMullen is one of three returning varsity players from last season's third place finish at state for the LHS volleyball team.

Louisburg's football team won seven games last season, which was four more than the year before despite a first-round exit in the playoffs. The Wildcats saw their numbers rise from 58 to 63 this season and are ready to make an improvement on the field as well.

They are going through 2-a-days now and will finish a grueling week with an 8 a.m. scrimmage Saturday.

"The first couple days have gone real well, however we are a little limited in what we can do and expect without full pads," football coach Kyle Littrell said. "We have a great group of kids who have committed themselves to our grueling summer program and the seniors have really taken the leadership role and ran with it."

Volleyball spent the first three days of practice going through tryouts, but head coach Jessica Compliment saw numbers rise from 28 to 36 this season, which means a few more cuts

than last year, but Louisburg has to replace five varsity players from a year ago.

The Lady Cats might have the shortest amount of time to get ready of all the sports as they open their season with the preseason Frontier League tournament on Aug. 27 in Baldwin.

“The first few days of practice have centered around testing and conditioning,” Compliment said. “We started practice with the team on Thursday. I know the players are ready to get the season going, which is good because we have a quick turnaround with a tournament in a week.”



Louisburg’s (from left) Jon Paul Totta, Kyle Allen and Jacob Arnett take part in a drill during a soccer practice Wednesday.

First-year boys soccer coach Kyle Conley inherits a Wildcat program that won the regional tournament and advanced to the state quarterfinals. The numbers for the Wildcats program were up by just two from last year, but Conley has liked what he has seen out of his group thus far.

“The kids are focused and determined,” Conley said. “I am very pleased with their attitudes and work ethic. They seem eager to learn from each session. I love how the kids are believing

in the program and my philosophy.

“It is really good to finally get started and get things going. I am excited to see what this team will become. I do understand that our league is incredibly talented, but our mind set it going to be we have something to prove.”

As for cross country, head coach John Reece has seen a large number return for the season, especially on the girls. The Wildcats have 36 runners out this season – with 24 of those competing on the girls team. Louisburg had 31 total runners out a year ago.



Louisburg cross country runners Kaitlyn Gaza (left) and Lilly Mick finish up a practice run Wednesday.

Junior Wyatt Reece returns to help the boys after qualifying for the state meet as a sophomore.

“Practices have started great, especially since it is not 110 degrees in the shade,” coach Reece said. “Those who ran through the summer are ahead of the game. We hope to do some great things this year with almost all of my varsity girls returning.”

Look for full previews on each team next week at Louisburg

Stambaugh earns spot on JCCC volleyball team



Cate Stambaugh, a 2016 Louisburg High School graduate, recently got a chance to tryout for the Johnson County Community College volleyball team and made the most of it as she garnered a spot on the Cavalier team.

Cate Stambaugh thought her volleyball career was over the day she injured her ankle in a practice last October.

Stambaugh had to sit the bench as she watched the Louisburg High School volleyball team earn its fourth straight bid to the state tournament and later a third-place finish. It was after that the 2016 LHS graduate starting making plans for college without volleyball and attend Kansas State.

Needless to say Stambaugh was thrilled those plans went awry.

Instead, she was given an opportunity to try out on the Johnson County Community College volleyball team and hasn't left the Cavalier team since. Stambaugh earned a spot on the JCCC team and is now embarking on a second chance at the sport

she loves.

“After volleyball ended (last October) I knew I missed it, so when my roommate decided she would not be attending Kansas State I saw it as a sign so I contacted the head coach, Jennifer Ei,” Stambaugh said. “I got a tryout the next day and I’ve been practicing ever since.

“I’m so happy to be playing college volleyball. I never saw this as one of my goals but then when my career ended I knew I wasn’t ready for it to be done.”

Stambaugh played a vital role for Louisburg before her injury in her senior season. She finished with 168 kills to go along with 217 blocks and 70 solo blocks as the team’s middle hitter.

Now, Stambaugh is trying to get back into volleyball form after being away from the sport for so long and she is happy with her progress so far at Johnson County.

“We started 2-a-days two weeks ago and this will be our last week,” Stambaugh said. “They consist of weights, agility and skill work with team lunches between practices. They are tough but I have already seen so much improvement in myself and my teammates. The team bonding is a lot of fun as well.

“I am just determined to get back to my 100 percent potential and get back into volleyball shape.”

She joins a very successful JCCC program that has a rich volleyball history and the Cavaliers showed that in 2015. Last year, the Cavaliers finished fifth at the national junior college tournament and took first in the East Jayhawk Conference with a 9-0 record.

The Cavaliers were 35-7 on the season and have made 14 national tournament appearances since 1975, including 10 since 2003.

Stambaugh has shifted from her normal middle hitter position and is currently hitting from the right side at practice, but she is happy to help out wherever she can.

“I am open to the right or middle,” Stambaugh said. “I love them both. I just hope to have a strong two years of my career and maintain my school work and volleyball.”

Summer starts reloading process for Lady Cats



Louisburg sophomore Anna Dixon works on her serve-receive during a drill in the final day of the Lady Cats’ team camp July 13 at Louisburg High School. The Lady Cats also took part in the University of Kansas volleyball team camp the next day.

Success had not eluded the Louisburg High School volleyball program and with that has come high expectations every season.

The Lady Cats have qualified for the state tournament the last four seasons and have won the Frontier League three years in a row. Louisburg has placed at state each of those four trips and the Lady Cats have written another impressive chapter in the program’s history.

However, after last year's third-place finish at state, the Lady Cats had to say farewell to five seniors and are now forced to regroup as they return just three varsity players from a year ago. Louisburg started that rebuilding in early June when they began summer workouts and recently ended it when they had its team camp that ended on July 13.

Head coach Jessica Compliment had 39 girls out for the three-day team camp as she began sorting out where they different pieces were going to fit.



Louisburg head coach Jessica Compliment talks to her players during the final day of the Lady Cat team camp July 13.

“It thought our camp went pretty well,” Compliment said. “We went over a few things during that time and really stressed our back row defense and passing, which is what we do every year. It also gave the girls chance to learn how to play together, especially since we have so many younger kids this year after losing a big senior class.”

Following their camp, several Lady Cats made the trip to the University of Kansas volleyball team camp for the first time to learn from players and coaches from the Jayhawk program that made it to the semifinals of the NCAA Division I

Volleyball Tournament.

Louisburg sent 21 players to the 3-day Jayhawk team camp that ended on July 16. The Lady Cats learned from Big 12 Coach of the Year Ray Bechard and also had the opportunity scrimmage against other programs from around the area.

“I really think the girls had a good time at the KU camp,” Compliment said. “I had a couple tell me that they wanted to come by next year, so I think this was a good opportunity for our team. We had about eight hours of practice drills and eight hours of competition. This gave us a chance to play teams that we usually won’t see and it was a good experience.”

Earlier in the summer, all three levels – freshmen, junior varsity and varsity – competed in summer leagues in the area and each program played a level up. The freshmen group played in a junior varsity league, while the junior varsity played against other varsity level programs. The varsity competed against several larger teams in a league in Blue Valley.

“We definitely took our lumps at times,” Compliment said. “It gave us some time to figure out some things with our rotation and we went through some adversity. At the same time, I think we saw a lot of growth out of the girls, which will help this season.”

Those league also gave chances for returning players like Olivia Bradley, Sophie McMullen and Anna Dixon to assert themselves as leaders of the team.

Bradley, a senior, returns as the team’s middle hitter, while Dixon will join her on the outside as a sophomore. McMullen, a junior, comes back for her third season as the team’s setter.



Ryann Kramer sends the ball over the net during a hitting drill

“For us to be successful those three girls need to become leaders for us, especially for the younger players,” Compliment said. “As the setter I think it is important Sophie to be the leader on the floor and she has a lot of experience out there now. Anna and Olivia played big roles on our team last year so they need to do that as well. I think the summer has helped them in that regard.”

Turner takes part in KVA all-star match despite injury



Louisburg High School graduate Madison Turner stands in the huddle with her Blue team during a timeout in the Kansas Volleyball Association All-Star match on June 4 at Washburn University in Topeka. Turner was forced to sit out of the match with an injury.

When she was selected to participate in the Kansas Volleyball Association All-Star match, Madison Turner had every intention of playing against some of the best seniors Kansas had to offer.

The Louisburg High School graduate was looking forward to taking the floor for the June 4 match at Washburn University in Topeka. However, a knee injury derailed that plan as Turner, who was supposed to play for the Blue team, had to sit from the bench and watch.

Turner's Blue team lost a close five set match to the Red team, 25-13, 19-25, 25-19, 22-25 and 16-14. Although Turner didn't get a chance to showcase her talents with the rest of the state's best, she still had a good time.



Madison Turner enjoyed her weekend at the KVA

All-Star match in Topeka.

“It was a great experience and a fun weekend,” Turner said. “I was really bummed that I wasn’t able to play. I was coming off an injury that I had been dealing with since nationals for club volleyball in April. I was planning on playing in the match, but a week before I realized that I would not be able to because of my injury. I feel that I worked hard to get the honor to be on the team and to not be able to play was hard.”

She had to do a lot of leg work to earn a spot on the team. Louisburg High School head coach Jessica Compliment nominated Turner for the team, and once she was selected, Turner had to secure \$300 worth of sponsors for expenses for the weekend-long event.

The event featured a lunch and dinner for the players and parents and it helped take Turner’s mind off not playing.

“I spent several days going around to individual businesses in Louisburg asking them for donations to sponsor the event,” Turner said. “Most of the places I went to were very willing to donate. When we got there we each received a shirt and spandex to play the match in and it was just a great time. They really made each of us feel very special.

“Some of the girls that were on the team I have played against in club or high school volleyball. There were some girls that I had not met before and I am friends with now. Everyone was really nice and it was a great weekend.”

Turner, who played the middle hitter spot for Louisburg last season and stands at 6-foot, 4-inches, had a big season for the Lady Cat program. She garnered a first team all-Frontier League selection as she helped Louisburg to its third straight undefeated league crown and a third-place finish at the state tournament.

She was also on three state tournament teams during her career, including a second-place finish as a sophomore. This past season, Turner led the Lady Cats with 327 kills and also had a team-high 266 blocks to go along with 37 aces.

Now Turner's focus will turn to staying healthy and getting ready for her next volleyball experience. Turner signed to play with Arkansas State University, a Division I program out of Jonesboro, Ark.

She has to report to the Red Wolves program in two weeks and she is looking forward to playing college volleyball.

"I am super excited to head down to Arkansas State," Turner said. "I have to report on July 5 because I have to take two summer classes so I can be on campus and practice with the team. My parents and I are heading down a couple days before so I can get moved into my dorm. There are three volleyball camps in July that I will be working as well, which will be fun."

Paola AD proposes bill to help classification issue



Last October, Paola activities director Jeff Hines went to a Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) regional meeting to get updates on classification issues.

Six months later, Hines found himself in Topeka, in front of the Kansas Senate Education Committee to talk about a bill that could change the way schools are classified.

On Thursday, Hines sat in front of the committee to discuss Senate Bill 464 – a bill that he proposed with guidance of Sen. Caryn Tyson.

Statute 72-130 establishes specific guidelines pertaining to the organizational structure and functions of KSHSAA. Senate Bill 464 would change one part of the statute and strike the line which allows schools to be classified only by student enrollment.

“The total number of students in schools is a great starting point for classifying them,” Hines said. “It makes sense that the largest schools should play the largest schools and the smallest schools should play the smallest schools, but there are other things that need to be considered.”

For several months, KSHSAA has had a classification committee discuss different ways to have a competitive balance with its member schools. They came up with ideas of reducing the number of classifications or changing the number of schools in a division.

“There were no other factors being considered and that bothered me,” Hines said, “All that would do was reshuffle the schools just a little bit but we would have the same problem.”

The problem for the committee was its hands were tied thanks to the wording in Statute 72-130 that specifically states schools can only be classified by enrollment numbers and nothing else.

So Hines went to work and helped create Senate Bill 464, which does not give a specific solution to the problem, but rather would take wording out of the statute to allow KSHSAA to figure out how to classify schools on its own.

Hines gave a 15 minute testimony in front of the committee and then answered questions from the committee members for more than 30 minutes afterward. Before the hearing, Hines received support from every member in the Frontier League, Pioneer League and all but two schools in the Kaw Valley League, as those two didn't respond before the hearing.

Following Hines' testimony, Sen. Vicki Schmidt, R-Topeka, had concerns as to why KSHSAA did not come in front of the committee itself to ask for changes.

Hines informed the committee that it would be redundant for KSHSAA to endorse the plan, because if approved, member schools would still have to vote on it. He believes Bill 464 would let KSHSAA come up with a system and let schools improve it, instead of the legislature.

"KSHSAA wants to be neutral because this proposal would affect different schools in different ways," Hines said. "It could be very beneficial to some schools and others may not like it because they might have to move up a class. So, why should KSHSAA have to pick sides in it and pit member against member? It doesn't have to be that way in my opinion.

"Yes, a school that has to move up a classification might not like it, but is it the best thing overall for the association? They can't look themselves in the mirror and say 'No, this isn't the right thing to do?'

A major problem for some member schools in KSHSAA is they do not believe it is competitively equal the way it is currently structured.

"I am not a believer in participation medals," Hines said. "If they are kindergartners, sure, but when you start playing, part of being successful later in life is learning how to compete. We all competed for a job when you have gone in for an interview and that is good. You need to have that skillset and I am not saying that we need to give more trophies out and

give everyone a shot, but I just want a system in place that is equitable for all so that some don't have an unfair advantage at the expense of the rest and I think that is what is happening."

One of the problems is the lack of balance between championships won between public and private high schools. Hines did research and presented numbers at the hearing at the number of state championships won between private and public schools from 2004 to 2014.

Here is what he found.

- Private schools make up slightly less than 8 percent of the KSHSAA membership.
- Private schools have won slightly less than 32 percent of the state championships.
- Based on membership percentage, private schools should only win approximately 8 percent of the titles, not nearly 32 percent.
- Private schools are winning four times more state titles than should be expected based on their memberships.
- Private schools are nine times more likely to win five or more state titles than their public school peers.

"In that period of time, I looked for who has won five or more state titles," Hines said. "That is a difficult feat. You look at Paola's history and we have won like seven and Louisburg has won three in 100-plus years. During those 10 years, 37 percent of those private schools won five or more during that time and public schools had 4 percent win five or more. Private schools are nine times more likely to become a dynasty or a successful program with strong tradition. You tell me how we are all the same?"

Another problem they are facing is schools with a high percentage of low socioeconomic status (SCS) students, cannot compete against fellow schools in their own classification in

many activities, including football.

“There is a whole bunch of schools in the Kansas City, Kansas school district that are 6A or 5A that have no business competing against those really hard schools,” Hines said. “They don’t have resources, they don’t have the students, there is no interest and they have all those things working against them and I feel bad for those kids. Who wants to trot out against some of those bigger schools and know you are going to get your ears boxed in? That is not fun. Moreover, it is not challenging for the kids those schools are playing against.”

Hines believes competition is important when it comes to the growth of the student athlete and it is beneficial for the school and its community.

“Not only what it does for grades, but for what it does for the human spirit,” Hines said.

“When I was the FFA advisor in Paola, we won 10 state championships in nine years and you could tell the interest by the students and the community went through the roof. You can say the same thing about Louisburg and what Jim Morgan does with his FFA kids. People flock to success.

“Naturally, when they are there they feel better about themselves, they want to work harder in the classroom to stay eligible and kids that want to stay involved are going to be more successful in life. It is all about having the chance to be successful.”

During Hines’ testimony in front of the Senate Education Committee, not all of the legislatures seemed open to the idea. Molly Baumgardner, R-Louisburg, asked Hines if he would be willing to relinquish state funding if the legislature agrees to release oversight of how KSHSAA classifies schools.

“If we relinquished the funding behind it, (high school activities) would disappear,” Hines said at the hearing.

No action was taken following the hearing, but the committee chairman spent 15 minutes with him and Tyson to help them strategize on what to do next.

One option is to amend the bill to include more specifics that could include a multiplier or a separate division for private schools and a low SCS school de-multiplier.

Another option, Hines said, would be to have the classification committee draft a letter to the Senate Education Committee that states they would like to study these other factors as part of a proposal for revamping the classification system, but not until they feel the legislature is open to changing the law.

Whatever decision comes next, however, Hines wants it to be decided by multiple people within KSHSAA on how to proceed.

“I don’t feel comfortable making that change because I feel a committee needs to do the work,” Hines said. “I shouldn’t be doing it, nor should 11 legislators, you need more. We should let the classification committee work on it and hopefully we can get some things accomplished.

“The only way to allow this to happen is to remove the barrier in place that exists due to the state statute.”

Top 10 stories of 2015



Here are the Louisburg Sports Zone Top 10 Stories of the Year. In each brief explanation of the story, there will be a link to the full story of when the event actually happened. Thanks again for a successful 2015 and I am already looking forward to 2016.



Hogan Welch (left) and Wyatt Reece each qualified for state in their respective sports.

10. Welch and Reece qualify for state

LHS students Hogan Welch and Wyatt Reece each put together strong seasons in their respective sports.

In May, Welch qualified for the Class 4A state golf tournament after he shot an 85 at the Osawatomie Golf Course to become one of five individual qualifiers for state. It was the first time Welch had qualified for the state tournament and would shoot a 79 a week later in McPherson to finish 40th overall.

As for Reece, he qualified for the state cross country meet for the first time in his career in October. The Louisburg

sophomore came in 13th overall and was also one of five individual qualifiers. A week later Reece traveled to Wamego to compete at the state meet and ran a 18:43 to come in 71st.



Louisburg's Jimmy Dolan (left) and Mya Diacono each suffered major head injuries from an accident just days apart. The Louisburg community rallied together to help the two families.

9. Accidents bring Louisburg community together

Jimmy Dolan and Mya Diacono live in the same community but were worlds apart from each other.

Jimmy, a junior at Louisburg High School, loves to wrestle, hang out with friends and live the life of a teenager.

It was a far cry from 9-year-old Mya who loves soccer, horses and spending time with her fourth-grade friends at Broadmoor Elementary. In a town of less than 5,000 people, the two had

never met.

Two tragic accidents changed all of that.

On Jan. 12, Jimmy lost control of his vehicle while driving to school and suffered a major brain injury. Just 42 days later, Mya was involved in an automobile accident just outside the Louisburg city limits that left her with the same severe brain trauma.

That was when the Louisburg community came together to help the two families cope with a burden no family should have to bear. Since then, both Jimmy and Mya are on the road to recovery thanks to the help of a lot of people.



Louisburg Soccer Club president Karin Olson (second from left), Louisburg High School junior Maddie McDaniel (middle) and fundraising organizer Diana Moore (right) receive the WIN for KC Sprint Teamwork Award on Feb. 13 in Kansas City, Mo.

8. Girls soccer raises funds to start program, wins award

A fundraising committee made a big push to make sure there was a girls soccer program at Louisburg High School.

The committee raised \$39,000 in almost a year's time to fund the program for three years. Thanks to all the hard work, the group was also recognized by the WIN for KC organization. The Lady Cats' soccer season will kickoff in late March.



Louisburg graduates Kody Cook (left) and Garrett Griffin are each winding down their careers with their respective Division I football programs.

7. Griffin, Cook wrap up college careers

Louisburg High School graduates Kody Cook and Garrett Griffin have lived the lives a lot of football fans could only hope for.

Both are wrapping up their Division I collegiate football careers and are doing it with a lot of success. Cook is living his dream with the Kansas State football team as he has made contributions at both the wide receiver and quarterback positions to help the Wildcats to the Liberty Bowl.

Griffin, on the other hand, battled through an injury-plagued senior season to help Air Force reach the Armed Forces Bowl and made several big plays at the tight end spot.



Louisburg quarterback Austin Terry was one of several players responsible for the Wildcats' turnaround this season.

6. Wildcat football has big turnaround

After finishing with just three wins a year ago, the Louisburg High School football team put together a strong season in 2015 as they finished with seven wins.

Those seven victories put the Wildcats within a game of Paola for the Frontier League title and Louisburg also earned a spot in the regional playoffs before falling to Basehor-Linwood in a tight contest.



The Louisburg High School soccer team captured its first regional crown since 2010 after a 2-0 win over Coffeyville.

5. Louisburg soccer wins regional crown

Through much of the regular season, the Louisburg High School soccer team didn't have much to cheer about.

The Wildcats had just four wins during the regular season, but they seemed to find the right chemistry in the postseason. Louisburg rattled off three consecutive wins in the postseason, including a 2-0 victory over Coffeyville-Field Kindley in the regional championship.

It was the Wildcats' first regional title since 2010 and their sixth in the last 10 years.



Anders Vance won a regional title in the 285-pound weight class last February as he was one of five Wildcats to earn state bids.

4. Louisburg wrestling qualifies five for state

The Louisburg wrestling team hadn't been a part of the state tournament since 2012 – that is before last season.

The Wildcats put together a breakout season as they qualified five for the state tournament, while Anders Vance won the regional crown at 285 pounds. Brenton Wrigley (195 pounds), Mason Koechner (220), Nathan Keegan (113) and Ryan Adams (138) all made the trip to Salina for the Class 4A state tourney.



Jeff Lohse (left) and Ben York each stepped away from their head coaching posts in 2015.

3. Long-time coaches resign from post

Jeff Lohse and Ben York had been fixtures in their respective sports for Louisburg High School, but both decided to call it quits this year.

Lohse, who spent the last 17 years as the head coach for the LHS baseball team, stepped down from his spot in May, citing personal reasons. Lohse led the Wildcats to two state tournament appearances.

York, who was the head coach when the boys soccer program started, also cited personal reasons for leaving the Wildcat soccer program after 13 years. York helped the Wildcats to six regional titles in the last 10 years.



Connor McMullen won the state title in the discus back in May and became Louisburg's first track state champion since 2011.

2. McMullen wins state title in discus, Dennis medals in hurdles

Louisburg High School senior Connor McMullen finally got the state title in the discus he had been searching for.

McMullen recorded a throw of 173 feet, 1 inch on his final attempt to win the Class 4A state discus title in Wichita back in May. He would also medal eighth in the javelin with a toss of 164-02.

Fellow senior Sean Dennis also garnered a state medal as he took fourth in the 110-meter hurdles. The boys and girls team combined sent a total of 11 athletes to the state meet.



The Louisburg High School volleyball team finished third overall in 2015 after making it to state for the fifth time in the last six seasons.

1. Lady Cat volleyball takes third at state

The Louisburg High School volleyball team has made a habit of making the trip to Salina in recent years and this season was no exception.

This time, however, the Lady Cats finished with a victory.

After ending their season with a runner-up performance and two fourth-place finishes at state the last three years, Louisburg won its final match of the season in 2015 as it defeated Tonganoxie in the third-place match.

The Lady Cats qualified for the state tournament for the fifth time in the last six years.

Dunn, Turner help Kansas to all-star victory



Lauren Dunn (left) and Madison Turner (right) pose for a picture with Louisburg High School coach Jessica Compliment following the GKCVCA Mo-Kan All-Star match on Nov. 15 at Avila University. Dunn and Turner helped Kansas to a 3-0 victory. Both players, along with LHS freshman Anna Dixon, also earned KVA all-state honors.

Photos courtesy of Amy Turner

Lauren Dunn and Madison Turner might have walked off the volleyball court together for the final time as members of the Louisburg volleyball team back in late October, but they weren't done teaming up just yet.

Dunn and Turner were selected to participate in the Greater Kansas City Volleyball Coaches Association Mo-Kan All-Star Match on Nov. 15 at Avila University. The two players joined with several other Kansas City area all-stars to compete in the small-class match.

The Louisburg duo did their part in helping Kansas to a 25-13,

25-16 and 25-17 victory over Missouri to avenge a loss from a year ago, when then-Louisburg seniors Bailey Dvorak and Sydney Dixon fell just short in their attempt.

“It was bittersweet,” Dunn said. “In the very last set of the game, I turned toward Madison and I was like ‘Last time on the same side of the net.’ So it was awesome to have one more game with her.”

Turner felt the same way.

“Lauren and I have been playing volleyball together since the third grade, either on a rec team or through CYO (Catholic Youth Organization), so knowing that the all-star game was the last time we would be playing together was definitely bittersweet.”



Madison Turner (left) and Lauren Dunn team up for a block during the Nov. 15 all-star match at Avila University.

Each player scored some big points during the match and both players left the court the same way they did during the high school season – with a win.

“It was really fun to be on the all-star team and to play with

all the girls," Turner said "I have played against them all during the high school season and four or five of the girls I have played with on the same club team or against during club season, so it was really nice to be on the same side of the net as a team.

"It was a really fun experience. Everyone selected to be on the team are really good players and all really nice girls and I am glad that I had the opportunity to play with them all. And it's always fun to win."

Being selected as an all-star wasn't the only honor to come their way in recent weeks.

The Kansas Volleyball Coaches Association announced the all-state teams and both players received honors, along with Louisburg teammate Anna Dixon.

Turner was named to the Class 4A Division I all-state first team for her role as the Lady Cats' middle blocker. She led the Lady Cats in both kills (327) and blocks (266) and she also finished with 37 aces.

"I was very honored to be selected to be on the all-state first team," Turner said. "I feel that I had a really good senior season and it was really nice to be recognized for all my hard work."

Dunn garnered second team honors as she played all six rotations for Louisburg. She was second on the team in digs (289), third in kills (281) and third in aces (39).

"I was pretty excited to get the honor but I was proud that we had three girls from our team on it as well," Dunn said. "It was a great way to cap off the season."

As for Dixon, she was named to the honorable mention team as the Louisburg freshman had a great first year for the Lady Cats. Dixon was second on the team in kills (304), aces (59)

and third in digs (251) as she played all six rotations as well.

Turner and Dunn are both moving on to play in the college ranks. Turner signed to play at Arkansas State, while Dunn inked with the Pittsburg State volleyball program.

Turner signs with Arkansas State



Louisburg High School senior Madison Turner signed her letter of intent to play volleyball at Arkansas State on Wednesday at Louisburg High School. Sitting next to Madison are her parents Amy and Brad Turner. Standing is Louisburg High School coach Jessica Compliment.

It is isn't hard to spot Madison Turner on the volleyball court.

Turner, who stands at 6 feet, 4 inches, can usually be found in the middle of all the action at the net. Whether it was with blocks or kills, Turner turned a lot of heads and college coaches seemed to take notice.

The Louisburg High School senior pulled in a lot of college offers and took a dozen visits, but when it came down to it, Turner's college choice was an easy one to make.

On Wednesday, Turner signed her letter of intent to play for Arkansas State University, a Division I program in Jonesboro, Ark. Her dream finally became a reality.

"It is very exciting," Turner said. "I knew I always wanted to play Division I and it has been my goal for a long time."

It was a goal that took a lot of hard work in the weight room and countless matches on the floor, whether it was in high school or club volleyball.

"I am just really excited for her and to see what she can do in her four years there," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "Madison has had to deal with some injuries from time to time that has prevented her from coming to the summer weights program, but when she could come she would and work hard. I am very excited she found a school that she really likes."

Turner joins an Arkansas State program that is on the rise. The Red Wolves recently won the regular season Sun Belt Conference championship and have nearly had a perfect season.

Arkansas State is 25-1 on the season and finished with a 16-0 record in the conference. The Red Wolves' lone loss so far was to Missouri in early September and have since rattled off 21 wins in a row.

Red Wolves coach David Rehr is excited to see what Turner can bring to their program.

"Madison is already an excellent blocking middle and her offensive game profiles to our style of play," Rehr said in a statement. "She's got great size and is a good athlete too so I'm excited on getting her on campus next season and watching her compete. I expect her offensive game to just get better

and better once she gets here.”

Although it was an exhaustive process at times that brought along plenty of offers, Turner’s decision wasn’t a difficult one as she fell in love with the program during her visit last May.

“It was really easy to choose Arkansas State because I knew I wanted to attend there after I visited,” Turner said. “I had visited about a dozen other colleges and had other offers, but Arkansas State just felt right. I really liked it there. The coaches are amazing, and I really liked the campus and everything about their volleyball program.”

Turner had a big season for the Lady Cat program as she garnered a first team all-Frontier League selection as she helped Louisburg to its third straight undefeated league crown and a third-place finish at the state tournament. She was also on three state tournament teams during her career, including a second-place finish as a sophomore.

Serving as the team’s middle hitter this season, Turner led the Lady Cats with 327 kills and also had a team-high 266 blocks to go along with 37 aces.

“Playing Louisburg volleyball has been really fun, especially my senior season because I got to play with all my close friends which was great,” Turner said. “My high school career ended with a win at state which was how I wanted to end it. It was great going to state all those years.”

As for her future, Turner knows the jump from high school to Division I volleyball is going to be a big one, but she is looking forward to the challenge.

“The coaches said they wanted to redshirt me the first year because they want me to get stronger before I get out there and play,” Turner said. “I think it would be beneficial because it will give me a chance to get better and stronger.”

Madison is the daughter of Brad and Amy Turner and is planning on entering the medical field.

Dunn inks with Pittsburg State



Louisburg High School senior Lauren Dunn signed her letter of intent Wednesday to play volleyball at Pittsburg State University. Sitting next to Lauren are her parents Don and Janie Dunn. Standing is Louisburg High School volleyball coach Jessica Compliment.

When Lauren Dunn started thinking about where she wanted to play college volleyball, there was really only one school that stood out among the rest.

As it turns out, it is only about 80 miles down the road.

Dunn's top choice became a reality Wednesday when she signed her letter of intent to play volleyball at Pittsburg State University.

"It was kind of a family thing for me," Dunn said. "A lot of my family has gone there and I have always liked the school

and the program.

“I ended up deciding last summer and the coaches and seniors that were there when I took my visit really welcomed me in. I got a chance to meet the freshmen that are playing there now and they are all a really nice group of girls. It is a lot of the same type of friendships there that I saw on our Louisburg team.”

Dunn, a senior, has had quite the career for the Louisburg High School volleyball program. She has participated in state tournaments all four years and has placed each time out.

As a sophomore, she helped the Lady Cats to a runner-up finish at the Class 4A-Division I state tournament. Louisburg also finished third place this past season and fourth the other two years.

It is those state tournament appearances that she hopes can propel her to a big career with the Gorillas.

“It has prepared me quite a bit,” Dunn said. “We have been to state the last four years so that has really helped with the experience of playing high, intense volleyball.”

For much of her Lady Cat career, she has played all-around the court and has thrived in the different spots.

Dunn, who was a first-team all-Frontier League player this past season, was among the team leaders in several different categories. She was second on the team with 389 digs, third in kills with 281 and third with 39 aces.

“The coaches have told me that they see me playing six rotations all the way around,” Dunn said. “I am just hoping that I can work hard enough to earn that six rotation spot when I get down there. There are seven freshmen playing down there now and there are five of us in this incoming class.”

The process wasn't too difficult for Dunn who always had Pitt

State in the front of the line and now she will get the opportunity to live out her dream.

“Lauren has always been 100 percent Pitt State,” Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. “I am so glad to see that she got what she wanted because that is what she has been working so hard for. I am happy to see what the next four years brings for them.”

Next fall Dunn will take the floor for the Division II Gorillas in the MIAA Conference. Along the way she will run into a couple familiar faces. She will play against former teammates Sydney Dixon (Fort Hays State) and Bailey Dvorak (Lindenwood) next season as both have completed their freshman seasons with their respective schools.

“I talked to them a little bit, but they have been pretty busy with their seasons,” Dunn said. “It will be different seeing them on the other side of the net because we played together for three years. I think it will be a lot of fun, but it will be different for sure.”

Pitt State is in the rebuilding process this season with seven freshmen this season and even more new players coming in for next year. It will be a lot of competition for Dunn to go against, but she is looking forward to the challenge.

“It is really exciting,” Dunn said. “I hope that I end up playing freshman year down there, but if not, I still think it is going to be a great experience for me. I am going to be learning from some of the best players down there.”

Lauren is the daughter of Don and Janie Dunn and she is planning on majoring in nursing or physical therapy.