

Changes to classification system will impact Louisburg



Member schools in the Kansas State High School Activities Association sent ripples across the state last week when they passed two proposals that will affect high school athletics beginning in the 2018-19 season.

For football, the two 4A divisions and Class 2-1A have been eliminated. They have been replaced with 32 team classifications in 4A, 5A and 6A, while 3A and 2A will have 48-team classifications. The remaining schools will play in 1A.

The second proposal was for all other sports. Other than football, classes 4A, 5A and 6A will have 36 teams in each division. Classes 3A and 2A will have 64 schools each, while the remaining schools will be in 1A.

The football proposal passed with a vote of 215-73 and the all-sports proposal passed with a 207-145 majority. All of the classes, except 6A and 1A, were in favor.

With those new proposals comes a different playoff system for many of the sports.

Louisburg High School, which is a Class 4A school, will see changes in five sports programs – football, basketball, baseball, softball and volleyball.

In football, Louisburg will no longer have district play as

the playoffs will begin in week nine. Class 4A will play an eight-game regular season and then each side of the state will be seeded in a bracket from 1 through 16, based on their record.

Given the fact the Frontier League currently has nine teams after recently adding three schools in Tonganoxie, Bonner Springs and Piper, the Wildcats will no longer have to play a non-league opponent. De Soto recently chose to leave the Frontier League following the 2017-18 season to join a new league made up of 5A schools.

“Normally we go out in October to Salina, we would redistrict for 2018 and 2019,” Louisburg activities director Darin Gagnebin said. “I don’t even know that we will have to go cause our league has nine teams, so we would play eight league games and the ninth game gets assigned to you for the playoffs. As of right now in football, we will no longer have any out of conference opponents as long as we maintain nine in the league.”

Another change will be in basketball. For the postseason, there will no longer be substates, instead the 18 teams on each side of the state will be bracketed out by record beginning with two play-in games.

From there, the bracket will be sized down to four-team pods, with the higher seed hosting the game. Teams will have to win two games to reach the state tournaments. Pods will be 1-16-8-9 seeds, 4-13-5-12, 2-15-7-10 and 3-14-6-11. The eight pod winners will advance to the state tournament.

“Depending on where we fall, it could increase travel depending on where we are seeded,” Gagnebin said. “We could have to drive down to Coffeyville or drive up to Atchison, you just don’t know until the end of the year.”

Basketball schedules will also be different with the addition of the new league teams in 2018-19. There will no longer be

double round-robin schedules. There will be eight league games, six tournament games and athletic directors will have to find a way to fill the other six.

"We will start in August about building the new league schedule and it will be tough," Gagnebin said. "One thing you will see is we won't have double round-robin's anymore because we can't play everyone twice. I think there will be traditional rivalries that are held to where we would play those twice due to proximity. Quite frankly, it wouldn't be smart for Louisburg not to play Paola, Ottawa or Spring Hill twice due to higher attendance numbers and proximity. It will probably increase travel costs because you are playing more non-conference opponents."

Baseball and softball will be similar as there will no longer be regionals. Like basketball, there will be two play-in games with the same pod structure. The top four overall seeds will each host all games in their pod on the same day.

In volleyball, there will be four substates across the state, broken into eight brackets. There will also be nine teams in each substate, which will require a play-in game. Teams will need to win two games to qualify for state.

Postseasons for wrestling, track, soccer, cross country and golf will remain the same.

However, even with the new changes, the proposals don't address the competitive balance issue between public and private schools that many members have been talking about for the last several years.

Although he likes the new playoff system, the fact these changes don't address the problem is one of the reasons Gagnebin voted no on the new proposals.

"It was a shock because I didn't think it was going to pass," Gagnebin said. "Other than the playoff system, in my opinion,

it doesn't do anything for Class 4A. All the work that went into splitting 4A into two divisions is now gone. I feel bad for those schools because they put in a ton of work. It doesn't really affect us because we are locked into 4A and we are right in the middle of the pack.

"I didn't see how it benefited Louisburg or 4A, other than the playoffs system where it should ensure you have more competitive teams at state. Since you are seeding them out now, you shouldn't have a substate of teams with losing records. They could have done that without this."

Although private schools like Bishop Miege, which have won several state titles in the last few years, could find itself moving up a classification with the new measures, it isn't a permanent solution according to Gagnebin.

"Enrollment could bump some private schools up a class, but that doesn't fix the problem," Gagnebin said. "Private schools can control enrollment. According to (Miege) they are losing enrollment and could be back in 4A. It doesn't impact the private issue at all and that is why I didn't vote for it. It is not fixing what the 80 percent of athletic directors polled in Kansas asking what the biggest problems in classifications are. It doesn't address the real problem."

Dixon, Lady Cat volleyball raise money to help kids in Peru



Katie Dixon had always wanted to give back, but she just needed to figure out a way.

Dixon, a Louisburg High School graduate and former volleyball player, was the LHS junior varsity volleyball coach this past season and recalled what it was like being a teenage girl herself.

“When I started coaching, I was working part time at the research institute up at KU Med,” Dixon said. “Mental health was a big topic there and I remember when I was in high school what it was like. High school is a weird age for girls and you are coming into your own and lacking confidence.

“I did a little bit of research of how becoming knowledgeable about other cultures, and looking at the world outside of your own, helps with someone’s own mental stability, especially with teens.”

As it turned out, Dixon had already planned a trip to Peru to visit her college friend, Rachel Loder, who serves in the Peace Corps. However, instead of making the trip all about seeing her friend, Dixon decided to help those in Peru and the girls in her hometown as well.

Dixon wanted to give her Lady Cat players a chance to feel what it was like to help others in need, so this past fall she enlisted the Louisburg players to help her raise money to buy sports equipment to give to the children in Peru.

“I figured I could pair this up somehow and Rachel is just that kind of person that whatever she can help with, she will do,” Dixon said. “I just talked to her about what they needed.

She said something related to sports would be perfect and it was just a great match. At the time, she was implementing an after-school sports program to get them acclimated to American sports and they didn't have a lot of supplies.

"The girls got to meet Rachel over Skype and just the responses I got from the girls was great and it was all worth it."



Katie Dixon poses for a group picture with students from the elementary school in Chuyabamba.

During the fall, the Lady Cat volleyball team put together a letter-writing campaign asking for funds to help with purchasing items – more specifically – volleyball equipment.

"Every player had to bring in at least five mailing addresses of different family members and friends," Dixon said. "We spent about 10 minutes at the beginning of practice one day, just addressing envelopes and sent them off. People just started mailing in funds and it was so nice. All the girls were really into it. Everyone was so excited getting all the donations. It was really cool."

The girls raised enough money to buy 26 Tachikara balls, two indoor/outdoor nets, a ball pump and a couple ball bags to distribute between the two schools where Loder was located in

the village of Chuyabamba.

Although Dixon was happy with the fundraising, getting the equipment over to Peru was a different story. It was going to cost too much to mail them so Dixon was forced to take them with her when she traveled to Peru in April, which meant carrying around a ball bag and nets to go along with all her luggage.

"I had to check them on three separate airlines," she said. "To get there the cheapest, I went from Kansas City to Chicago, then to Miami and then to Lima. I had to recheck them at each lay over. I looked like an idiot. I had a saran wrap thing with the nets and I deflated all the balls to put them into one bag. People were laughing at me, for sure.

"When I got into Lima, I had to pull an all-nighter. I don't speak Spanish at all and I am actually one of taller people there. So I am this tall person, who doesn't speak Spanish, and has all this random stuff. I was trying to order something to eat and they were getting frustrated with me because my Spanish was horrible. It was pretty embarrassing, but definitely a learning experience."

The trip to Peru got much better after that as she connected with Loder, and the two made their way to Chuyabamba, where they would present equipment to the high school and the elementary schools.

They started at the high school, where they donated the balls and one net to the physical education department and held a camp with the older girls.

At the elementary school, Dixon went into each classroom and gave them the balls separately. She was also able to connect with the students.

"A student from every class gave a speech," Dixon said. "I had no idea what they were saying, but it was adorable. Some

teachers gave speeches as well, and one even cried, which was really touching to me. It was a bigger deal than I was expecting it to be."

Dixon even gave some Spanish a try as she gave little speeches to the groups and tried to communicate with them while putting on the camps.

"I told Rachel that I wanted to say something or at least give an effort at speaking the language," Dixon said. "She should have intervened way more as it was embarrassing, especially at the high school. They were so kind though. We got the message across.

"Rachel didn't play volleyball and she tried to translate for me when we did the camps. It was a little nuts. But it was cool to make the connection. I wish I could have taken all the (Louisburg) girls with me, because I think it would have been a great experience for them."

Three schools to join Frontier League



Three schools have accepted invitations, or will soon, to join the Frontier League for the 2018-19 season and beyond.

Piper, Bonner Springs and Tonganoxie will be leaving their

current home – the Kaw Valley League – to join the Frontier after all three were offered spots during a meeting in early April.

Their addition will now bring the Frontier League to 10 members, along with Louisburg, Paola, Ottawa, Spring Hill, De Soto, Baldwin and Eudora. The trio of schools made presentations to the current Frontier League members for admittance due to the fact the Kaw Valley is in the process of breaking up. Current member Bishop Ward is leaving the league next school year, which leaves them at six.

Piper quickly accepted the invitation following a vote of its board of education and is looking forward to joining the Frontier.

“We are extremely excited to get into a league with like-size schools and competition levels,” Piper High School activities director Doug Key said. “We believe Piper High School is good fit for the league due to the competition level in all activities and will match up well. We have played all current schools in various activities and felt like this would be a positive move for the future.

“Being in a league with various size schools and us being the smallest wasn’t going to be optimal. We are still are competitive in many areas, but we needed to secure a more balanced future. We feel like being in the middle, size-wise, will keep us competitive for years to come.”

According to this year’s classification numbers, Piper has a current enrollment of 601 students. Turner is the Kaw Valley’s biggest school with 1,114 students, followed by Lansing (910), Bonner Springs (758), Basehor-Linwood (710) and Tonganoxie (618).

Bonner Springs, Piper and Tonganoxie compare to other Frontier League programs. De Soto is the biggest school in the league with 854 students, followed by Ottawa (709), Spring Hill

(699), Paola (612), Louisburg (563), Eudora (471) and Baldwin (410).

Bonner Springs' board of education also approved the move to the Frontier League and Bonner Springs High School principal Rick Moulin echoed Key's statement.

"We have competed against teams in the Frontier League the past several years," Moulin said. "The schools in the Frontier League are a lot like Bonner Springs – we are competitive and value sportsmanship. The teams in the Frontier League are similar in size to Bonner Springs, which will be a great gauge for us as we try to compete at the highest level possible in 4A. Bonner Springs is a small town community, with great community support, much like the schools in the Frontier League.

"We are excited to be joining with Piper and Tonganoxie. We hope to continue to be able to compete against Basehor-Linwood, Lansing and Turner. I have a lot of respect for their schools and their programs. Ultimately, the Frontier League was a better fit for our students and our community."

Tonganoxie hasn't officially accepted the invitation, but it is just waiting for its board of education to approve the move during its May 8 meeting. At that point, according to Tonganoxie High School principal Mark Farrar, it will immediately send letter accepting the invite.

"We are very excited to join the Frontier League," Farrar said. "This new partnership will be very good for our students as well as our community. Joining the Frontier League will provide some great opportunities for our students from an athletic and activities standpoint. Tonganoxie mirrors many of the activities that most or all Frontier League schools offer. We see it as a league that will be a good fit for many years to come.

"One of the things that I think gets overlooked is the idea

that a strong league doesn't just offer opportunities on a playing field, but it also offers a chance for kids to network and make lifelong connections with students from all across the league. The Frontier League is a strong and stable league and we believe that it can advance the overall mission of what we want to do at Tonganoxie."

Louisburg High School activities director Darin Gagnebin now believes the league is healthier than ever.

"By adding teams to our league, it solidifies our league numbers for years to come ensuring that we, as a league, will remain strong and competitive whether schools decide to leave or stay," Gagnebin said. "We could have been in a situation in which the Frontier League could have dwindled to four or five schools, but instead we will be stronger at 10 teams, if all teams decided to stay.

That situation came about in March when it was reported by the Tonganoxie Mirror that Kaw Valley League member Lansing wanted to create a larger league that would have contained all or some combinations of Lansing, Blue Valley Southwest, De Soto, Leavenworth, Bonner Springs, Basehor-Linwood, Tonganoxie, Ottawa, Piper, Spring Hill, Turner and Topeka schools Seaman, Shawnee Heights and Topeka West.

A meeting was held between all the schools to look at possibilities of building a stronger league that would rebuild the current Kaw Valley that has Lansing, Turner, Piper, Bonner Springs, Tonganoxie and Basehor-Linwood.

The Frontier League responded with meetings of its own shortly after to discuss each member's happiness in the league after De Soto, Spring Hill and Ottawa attended the March meeting with Lansing.

De Soto mentioned needing more competition at the sub-varsity level since it has a growing enrollment and looked at the possibility of playing in a league with bigger schools since

it has made the jump to Class 5A.

Spring Hill's enrollment also looks to make that jump in three to four years, while Ottawa's enrollment usually hovers around the line between 4A and 5A. Still, all three schools stated during league meetings they were happy in their current position, with De Soto and Spring Hill stating they might need to make a move due to increasing enrollment numbers.

Faced with the possibility of losing at least two members, the Frontier invited Kaw Valley members to make presentations to join the league in order to fill those spots. Piper, Tonganoxie and Bonner Springs all made presentations and the Frontier League principals all offered invitations shortly after.

At this point, it appears the league is going to move forward with 10 members as no school has stated their desire to leave the Frontier – however, it doesn't mean it can't happen in the near future.

"I cannot speak for other schools in the Frontier League about their desire to stay or to leave," Gagnebin said. "I know some are considering their options and will do what they believe is in the best interest of their school, and I would support them in whatever they decide. I do believe though whatever they decide, with the addition of these new schools to our league, the Frontier League will remain solid in numbers and will continue to be one of the most competitive leagues in Class 4A.

"I believe the three schools that chose to petition our league for membership will be a great fit for the Frontier League. They offer all sports and activities that are currently offered by the league at all levels. Their enrollments, though larger than Louisburg, will put them in the middle to upper middle in size within the league."

The league schedule will also look different beginning with

the 2018-19 season, as there will no longer be a double round-robin schedule in certain sports and not every school will play each other in football.

"The biggest challenge will be league scheduling," Gagnebin said. "Although it will change how we schedule things as a league, most league schools already have some or all of these schools on some of their athletic schedules already. It could increase the amount of non-league games we have to go out and find in some sports, since with 10 teams you can no longer play a double-round-robin schedule as we have currently, due to the amount of games allowed by KSHSAA."

"This is both good and bad, meaning, it could increase travel and some expense, but it allows us greater flexibility in the schedule to play other teams outside the league as well. One negative will be in football. With 10 teams, we will not be able to play every team in the league as we do now. As stated before though, solidifying the league as far as numbers go and increasing the competitiveness of the league are also positives."

Frontier League breakup could happen soon



In a few months – or even weeks – the Frontier League as it

currently stands could have a different look.

Since March, meetings have gone on within member schools of the Frontier League and Kaw Valley League to discuss possible realignment of both leagues.

The Frontier League currently has seven members – Louisburg, Paola, Spring Hill, De Soto, Ottawa, Baldwin and Eudora – and a meeting between the schools took place on March 28 to discuss where each school stood as far as their happiness in the league.

Brian Biermann, superintendent of USD 416, and Louisburg High School athletic director Darin Gagnebin attended the meeting on Louisburg's behalf and both relayed the fact that every school stated they were happy with the way the league is currently set up, but a couple schools came to the realization the Frontier League might not be able to offer what they are looking for.

De Soto and Spring Hill currently have growing enrollment numbers are interested in playing Class 5A competition. De Soto moved up to 5A this school year and Spring Hill will look to make the jump in the coming years with its larger enrollment. The rest of the schools all compete in Class 4A.

Both schools stated they would like more competition at the sub-varsity level that schools like Louisburg, Baldwin and Eudora cannot provide. Competing in a mainly 5A league would relieve some of those problems.

"De Soto said they will probably open next year with 950 kids and they would grow by 100 the year after that," Biermann said. "They are happy in the Frontier, but they feel like they need 5A competition and they feel like it could hurt them in football with seedings and tie-breakers. They could potentially get penalized by competing in a mainly 4A league.

"Spring Hill wants to be proactive. Their growth is coming.

Their classes in the middle school are pretty good size. They won't grow a lot next year, but they will in the next few years."

What started the meetings is due to the fact that the Kaw Valley League is looking to rework their situation or create a brand new look altogether. The Kaw Valley currently has seven schools in Lansing, Turner, Bonner Springs, Tonganoxie, Piper, Bishop Ward and Basehor-Linwood, but one member – Bishop Ward – is leaving for a new league beginning next school year.

According to report in March from the *Tonganoxie Mirror*, Lansing wants to create a larger league that would contain all or some combinations of Lansing, Blue Valley Southwest, De Soto, Leavenworth, Bonner Springs, Basehor-Linwood, Tonganoxie, Ottawa, Piper, Spring Hill, Turner and Topeka schools Seaman, Shawnee Heights and Topeka West.

Many of those schools are either in Class 5A already or are close based on enrollment numbers. The idea of competing against bigger competition is intriguing to De Soto, Spring Hill – and possibly Ottawa – the three largest schools in the Frontier League.

An idea was thrown around of creating a league of two divisions between the Kaw Valley and Frontier. One division would be 5A schools and the other would be 4A.

"We visited with our board of education and we are not in favor of a mega-league," Biermann said. "That has been talked about – having a league of 5A and 4A schools. We don't want to invite new 5A schools. We are ok with Spring Hill and De Soto staying in the league, even though they are growing, but we don't want to invite other 5A schools or have a mega league so they can have better competition."

"Our stance is if De Soto and Spring Hill feel like they need 5A competition and leave, then they can work towards that and we can work on filling those spots with 4A schools."

Both Biermann and Gagnebin feel like the Frontier League needs to be proactive as changes could be made sooner rather than later.

"We aren't panicking as a league as much as the Kaw Valley schools are because they know they are headed for a break up," Gagnebin said. "We could easily stay with the seven schools we have. Pretty soon, De Soto will have close to 1,000 kids. It is more on them if they want to be in our league, and if they are happy, by all means stay. We are not saying they have to leave, but they have to do best what is for their school, and if this league isn't the best option for you, then you have to look elsewhere."

Due to the fact De Soto and Spring Hill could be moving on, the Frontier is being proactive and inviting some members of the Kaw Valley League to come make presentations at a meeting Wednesday to see if they would be a fit in the Frontier.

According to Biermann, Tonganoxie, Piper, Bonner Springs and Basehor-Linwood High Schools will all make presentations at the meeting and then schools from both the Kaw Valley and the Frontier will meet to discuss options at a later date.

"I led the (March 28) meeting and I wanted to make sure everyone was as honest and open as possible," Biermann said. "There were no hurt feelings. Collectively we don't want a mega-league, no additional 5A schools and that is firm from us, Paola, Baldwin and Eudora. Spring Hill and De Soto left the meeting, I think, that they need to start looking for potential 5A competition.

"The easy fix would be for De Soto and Spring Hill to join the bigger league and we take someone like Tonganoxie and Piper to replace them. Every school said they loved the Frontier League and competition, but it is time there has to be some conversations. The biggest thing is we don't have three baseball, softball or soccer teams to schedule, but De Soto

and Spring Hill want that. We can't field C teams in some cases."

The leagues are on a sort of a time crunch. With football reclassifications and scheduling beginning this October for the next two years, it would be the best case scenario to get the reshuffling done before then so they can schedule for the 2018-19 season and beyond according to Gagnebin.

The Louisburg activities director also believes keeping the right number of teams is also imperative for a healthy league.

"We want to maintain the integrity of our league, whether that is with seven or even eight schools," Gagnebin said. "We want to maintain that number. Nine is a scheduling nightmare, and if you only have six teams, you are opening up a can of worms where if you leave an open spot, then the state could come in and assign certain schools to us that aren't a good fit.

"I don't necessarily want them to leave the league, but we need to be told if they are. I am more afraid of them leaving our league than them staying in our league. I am not afraid of the competition we face with them. We can compete with them in all the sports, but I am more afraid of us dropping from a seven to a five-team league."

However, one hiccup remains. The Frontier League bylaws state that a member school must give two years notice before leaving the league.

"If the dominoes start falling fast, the league could pass a bylaw amendment to allow for movement for De Soto or whoever, which is something I think they will have to do," Gagnebin said. "Not much is happening now, but when it does it is going to happen quick. You better be ready to move with it and have a plan in place or you could be stuck on the outside."

Dixon garners KVA all-state honors



LHS sophomore Anna Dixon had a big season for the Lady Cat volleyball team and she has been recognized for it as she was selected to the KVA all-state team.

The season has been over for about a month now, but the accolades are still coming in for the Louisburg volleyball team – in particular – Anna Dixon.

The Louisburg High School sophomore was recently named to the Kansas Volleyball Association all-state second team for her play that helped the Lady Cats to the substate championship game.

Dixon had a monster season for Louisburg as she finished the season with a team-high 502 kills, 241 digs, 163 blocks and 53 aces from her all-around spot. Earlier this month, Dixon, a Kansas State commit, was also awarded first team all-Frontier League honors.

Kansas Volleyball Association All-State Volleyball Team

First team

Gracie Van Driel, so., Rose Hill, MB; Olivia Gassman, sr.,

Abilene, L; Jessica Hayes, sr., Abilene, OH; Hunter Mussetter, sr., Wamego, MB; Serena Sparks, so, Miege, L; Mallory White, so., Miege, OH; Emily Witt, jr., Rose Hill, S-RS.

Player of the Year: Gracie Van Driel, so., Rose Hill, MB.
Coach of the Year: Melissa Segovia, Rose Hill.

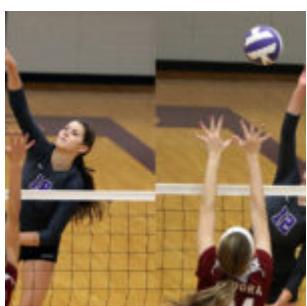
Second team

Mandi Cooks, jr., McPherson, OH-MB; **Anna Dixon, so., Louisburg, OH**; Claudia Hess, sr., Abilene, MB; Caedyn Reinhart, sr., El Dorado, MB; Brooklyn Strobel, so., Andover Central, L; Kennedy Wallace, sr., KC Piper; Hannah Weber, sr., Miege, MB.

Honorable mention

Sophia Dalziel, sr., Augusta, MB; Rachel Dossett, sr., McPherson, MB; Matti Morgan, sr., Paola, MB; Riley Oglevie, so., Ulysses, OH; Beth Schulte, sr., Andover Central, OH; Anna Van Driel, sr., Rose Hill, OH-RS; Mykah Wingerter, sr., Tonganoxie, MH.

McMullen, Dixon named to all-league first team



Louisburg sophomore Anna Dixon (left) and junior Sophie

McMullen were both recently selected to the all-Frontier League first team.

The season didn't end the way the Louisburg High School volleyball team had hoped, but that didn't mean the Lady Cats didn't have a strong season.

Louisburg finished with 23 wins on the year with a difficult schedule and earned a spot in the substate championship game. Now that the season is over, the postseason honors have rolled in and two Lady Cat players were recognized for their strong campaign.

Junior Sophie McMullen and sophomore Anna Dixon were both recently selected to the all-Frontier League volleyball team and both earned first-team honors.

"I was pleased to see that Sophie and Anna were recognized for their efforts and placed on the first team," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "Our league is always strong and had talented athletes this year. I thought the team was represented well within league."

McMullen, who missed part of the season with a leg injury, still racked up impressive numbers. She played all-around for Louisburg but was strong at the net with 292 kills and 72 digs.

She was also strong from behind the service line with a team-high 58 aces and also had 210 digs defensively. McMullen also handed out 224 assists as she shared setting duties with sophomore Carson Buffington.

As for Dixon, the Louisburg sophomore also played all-around but was considered one of the top hitters in the league and the numbers showed that. She led Louisburg with 502 kills and a team-high 163 blocks.

Dixon also had 241 digs defensively to go along with 53 aces.

"Both Sophie and Anna had a good season," Compliment said. "We leaned on them to make plays at certain times throughout the season, and I am looking forward to what they will bring the team next year."

League champion De Soto and Paola, which finished fourth at the Class 4A Division I state tournament, each had four selections to the team.

De Soto's Kaitlyn Bell and Maya Bascom earned first-team honors, as did Paola's Chandler Karr and Matti Morgan.

All-Frontier League Volleyball

First Team

Maya Bascom, De Soto, sophomore

Kaitlyn Bell, De Soto, sophomore

Anna Dixon, Louisburg, sophomore

Chandler Karr, Paola, senior

Sophie McMullen, Louisburg, junior

Matti Morgan, Paola, senior

Second Team

Hayley Cuba, De Soto, sophomore

Jordan Johnson, Paola, junior

Jackie Kennard, De Soto, senior

Kayla Maples, Eudora, senior

Megan Milroy, Spring Hill, senior

Kamryn Shaffer, Ottawa, junior

Honorable Mention

Sydney Bergan, Baldwin, junior

Alex Garcia, Eudora, sophomore

Kayla Kurtz, Baldwin, sophomore

Jasmine Thevarajoo, Eudora, senior

Skyler Williams, Paola, junior

All-Frontier League Volleyball List



Louisburg sophomore Anna Dixon (left) and junior Sophie McMullen recently earned all-Frontier League honors.

The All-Frontier League volleyball team was recently released following Saturday's state tournament and Louisburg earned two spots on the team. Sophomore Anna Dixon and junior Sophie McMullen were both recognized with first team honors. Below is the all-league list and a full story will follow later.

All-Frontier League Volleyball

First Team

Maya Bascom, De Soto, sophomore
Kaitlyn Bell, De Soto, sophomore
Anna Dixon, Louisburg, sophomore
Chandler Karr, Paola, senior
Sophie McMullen, Louisburg, junior
Matti Morgan, Paola, senior

Second Team

Hayley Cuba, De Soto, sophomore
Jordan Johnson, Paola, junior
Jackie Kennard, De Soto, senior
Kayla Maples, Eudora, senior
Megan Milroy, Spring Hill, senior
Kamryn Shaffer, Ottawa, junior

Honorable Mention

Sydney Bergan, Baldwin, junior
Alex Garcia, Eudora, sophomore
Kayla Kurtz, Baldwin, sophomore
Jasmine Thevarajoo, Eudora, senior
Skyler Williams, Paola, junior

Lady Cats end season with loss in title match



Sophomore Anna Dixon sends the ball over the net for Louisburg on Saturday during the Class 4A substate tournament at Louisburg High School. The Lady Cats earned a spot in the title game before falling to Paola in two sets.

Louisburg left it all out on the floor.

The Lady Cats chased down and dug up every loose ball they could get their hands on, hit the ball as hard as possible and played it out to the final point. The problem was, when that final point came, Louisburg had to sit and watch as another team celebrated on its home court.

During the Class 4A substate tournament Saturday at Louisburg High School, Paola downed Louisburg 25-22 and 29-27 in the championship game to snap a streak of four straight substate titles for the Lady Cats.

"They are disappointed," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "A lot of girls wanted to keep that streak going and the tradition that has been set. They feel like they let some of their teammates down and they wanted that trip back down to state. For those that have already been, they wanted their teammates that haven't been down there to experience that. It definitely hurts."

The teams went back and forth at each other in both sets and created for an intense match between the two rivals. Louisburg jumped out to an early 14-10 lead in the first set behind four kills from sophomore Anna Dixon and a pair of aces from junior Sophie McMullen.

However, Paola went on a mini 6-2 run to grab a 19-18 lead. The Panthers eventually built a 23-20 advantage and pulled away to take the opening set.



Freshman Haley Cain (left) and junior Sophie McMullen team up for a block Saturday during the Class 4A substate tournament.

In the second set, Louisburg again built an early 7-3 lead after three kills from Dixon and an ace from McMullen. The Panthers followed with a 6-1 run to go up 9-8, but the Lady Cats went back on top after a long rally and then McMullen

followed with a kill to take a 13-10 lead.

Paola battled back to grab an 18-17 lead late in the match and both squads would trade points the rest of the way. Dixon and McMullen added kills to keep the Lady Cats in it and freshman libero Riley Kallevig added a big dig to tie the match at 25-all.

The Lady Cats faced match point four different times and each time responded to tie it up and eventually went up 27-26 to force a match point of their own.

Senior Ellie Katzer, Kallevig, Dixon, McMullen and sophomore Carson Buffington were all a part of several big volleys late, but with it tied at 27, the Panthers responded with the final two points and the victory.

“The Paola match was a good one,” Compliment said. “Paola played great, but I thought we played really well too. We played some of our best ball today. We were running down so many balls, the girls were fighting for everything and didn’t let the ball drop. They really wanted it and they 100 percent went after it. I think some nerves got us a few times and that comes with the territory. Overall, we played well though.”

Dixon led the Louisburg offense with 15 kills, while McMullen added six kills and three aces. Senior Olivia Bradley also played well at the net with a team-high five blocks.

Dixon also added a team-high 17 digs, while Katzer and Kallevig had 14 and 13, respectively. Buffington ran the Louisburg offense and led the way with 14 assists and McMullen added eight.

Louisburg (23-17) started the day strong with a 25-16 and 25-18 win over Ottawa in the substate semifinals. The Lady Cats were never threatened by the Cyclones as they played with the lead most of the way.



Freshman Riley Kallevig sends a serve over the net Saturday in Louisburg.

McMullen had a big match with a team-high 14 kills. Dixon added nine kills in the win to go along with three aces. Buffington also handed out 21 assists.

Defensively, Dixon also had a team-high 12 digs and four blocks, while freshman Haley Cain added eight digs. Bradley also finished with four blocks.

"Coming out against Ottawa, we had a lot of energy," Compliment said. "All day we talked about getting that energy and mental game. We played Ottawa really tough, served tough, were aggressive at the net and the girls did a good job of setting the pace."

For the first time in five years, Louisburg will not be making the trek out to Salina for the state tournament and the Lady Cats will look back on what was an up and down season. It also marked the final time seniors Tayler Lancaster, Katzer and Bradley suited up for Louisburg.

"The season overall was kind of a roller coaster ride for us," Compliment said. "We had a lot of roller coaster rides out there and we played with some different lineups throughout the year. Throughout it all, I think they learned a lot about each other and they learned a lot about themselves. They grew as a team and overall it was a good season. We have a tough schedule to where we see a lot of good teams and hopefully that just builds experience for us."

Lady Cats down Ottawa to end regular season



Louisburg freshman Haley Cain splits a pair of Ottawa blockers for a kill Tuesday at Ottawa High School. Louisburg defeated

Ottawa in three sets to win its regular season finale.

OTTAWA – As far as records and standings go, Louisburg's match with Ottawa on Tuesday was essentially meaningless.

The Lady Cats already had the No. 2 seed in the substate tournament locked up and they didn't have much to gain in the Frontier League standings. However, this was more than just about seedings and records.

Coming off a 2-4 performance at the Emporia Invitational last Saturday, the Lady Cats needed to hit the reset button on their season. So far, so good.

Louisburg began its fresh start with something positive with a 25-21, 26-24 and 25-13 win over the Cyclones at Ottawa High School.

"We played pretty well," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "They really came out focused and ready to play. After the Emporia tournament, we talked a lot about how we have to approach every match with a level of intensity, focus and determination and we didn't have that Saturday. We just were going through the motions and this was different. They set their tempo during warmups and that carried them into the game. They were determined to play well as a team."

They did that as the Lady Cats (22-16) jumped out to a 7-3 lead in the first set behind four kills from sophomore Anna Dixon and an ace from sophomore Carson Buffington. Louisburg held a 20-13 before Ottawa went on a 7-1 run to get to within one point.

Junior Sophie McMullen helped Louisburg pull away as she recorded three kills and freshman Riley Kallevig added an ace to score the final four points and grab the first set.



Junior Sophie McMullen sets up a teammate at the net for a kill Tuesday in Ottawa. McMullen led the Lady Cats with 20 kills on the night.

In the second set, Louisburg once again jumped out to a big 16-8 advantage thanks to kills from senior Olivia Bradley, McMullen, Dixon and freshman Haley Cain. A tip from McMullen and an ace from Kallevig gave Louisburg a 22-15 lead, but the Cyclones came roaring back.

Ottawa went on a 7-0 run to tie the set at 22-all before Cain notched a kill to give the Lady Cats a one point lead. The Cyclones tied it up two more times before Dixon had back-to-back kills for the close 26-24 win.

"We definitely had to battle to win that one, so I was glad to see that determination to finish a match and not give up," Compliment said. "There were a couple times where we were

playing a little tight and a little nervous and they just need to work on loosening up.

"We have been in a lot of close matches all season long. We fell short at the beginning of the season, but we have had some close ones lately that we have been able to pull out so that was good to see."

There wasn't as much drama in the third set as the Lady Cats jumped out to a 9-3 lead behind three kills and an ace each from McMullen and Dixon. McMullen then recorded two more kills and a block to put Louisburg on top 15-7 during a span in which senior Ellie Katzer served five straight points.

McMullen led the Louisburg offense with a team-high 20 kills, and also had 12 assists and two aces. Dixon added 18 kills and a team-high 20 digs. Kallevig had three aces to lead the Lady Cats along with 12 digs and Katzer recorded 13 digs.

Buffington also had a good night setting the ball with 23 assists and was also in double figures with 11 digs.

"Sophie had a good night," Compliment said. "All the girls defensively really played well too. I think that Ellie, being a senior, she has helped keep people calm back there. Carson and Sophie did a better job of moving the ball around more and giving our hitters a chance. We were just more focused."

Louisburg will see the same Ottawa team again Saturday when it hosts the Class 4A-Division I substate tournament. The Lady Cats, the No. 2 seed, will play No. 3 Ottawa (13-22) following the first match between No. 1 Paola (23-12) and No. 4 Fort Scott (12-22), which begins at 2 p.m.

The Lady Cats are vying for their fifth consecutive regional crown and another trip to the state tournament.

"They are excited," Compliment said of her players. "There are still a lot of nerves but they are starting to get that

mindset that they are ready to see what they can do."

Dixon commits to Kansas State volleyball



Louisburg sophomore Anna Dixon sends one of her team-high 382 kills over the net during a match earlier this season. On Sunday, Dixon made a verbal commitment to play volleyball for Kansas State.

Most eighth graders spend their time thinking about what high school is going to be like, what they are going to wear to school the next day or how much homework they have to do.

Anna Dixon did some of that, but she also spent most of her days in eighth grade wondering where she was going to go to college. You see, schools have been recruiting Dixon to play volleyball since her time in Louisburg Middle School.

Division I programs from across the Midwest expressed interest in Dixon and those programs ask their recruits to make a decision by their sophomore season in high school. After two years of recruitment, the Louisburg High School sophomore figured out where she wanted to go to school.

Dixon verbally committed to Kansas State on Sunday after receiving offers from three other schools and interest from several others.

"A lot of my family went there and I was looking for a college in a top conference and the Big 12 is one of the top three conferences for volleyball," Dixon said. "I was wanting to go somewhere where I could be a part of the program and I felt K-State was somewhere that I could fit in well."

"The atmosphere at K-State is just incredible. The people were so much nicer than anywhere I went and that definitely stuck out to me. That was a big thing for me too."

Dixon received offers from Creighton, Missouri and Wichita State and also had strong interest from Kansas and Colorado State, but she felt a tug toward Manhattan. Kansas State started recruiting her in eighth grade and made her an official offer over Christmas break last year.

The decision was a tough one for Dixon, as she had several choices to choose from, but she admits she is glad for it to all be over.

"It felt like a huge relief," she said. "The recruiting process started for me around eighth grade, and while the process was exciting, it also got super stressful because I am at such a young age and it is hard to know where you want to go in four years because there is so many things you have to think about."

"It is different for every girl, but for me it was stressful because colleges were asking me what I wanted to major in and what I look for in a college. I was like I don't even know what I want for breakfast the next morning, much less what I want to do in four years."

Although Dixon can't officially sign her letter of intent until her senior year of high school, she is excited to join

the Wildcat program. Her family, including her parents Jerry and Beth Dixon, were all smiles as well.

"They were super excited, especially my dad," Anna said. "They were going to support me wherever I went, but I think they all wanted me to K-State. They were all really happy for me."

The K-State coaches have told Dixon they plan to use her as an outside hitter, but could also see her playing six rotations. She currently plays all six spots for Louisburg as she leads the Wildcats with 382 kills, 128 blocks and 44 aces on the season.

"They told me they think I can be pretty big for their program," Dixon said. "I hope they are right and I am going to help out the program in any way that I can. I am really looking forward to it."