

Opinion: Rough patch leads to new beginning



I am just going to come right out and say it, "I'm scared."

Yeah, it is an unusual way to start out an opinion piece, but there is no two ways around it – I am petrified. But believe it or not, it is what keeps me going.

We have all had at least one point in our existence where our lives changed for better or worse. I have had more than a few of those in my life, but the latest one came on Jan. 9.

It started out like all the other Fridays over the last seven years. I reported to work, spent a few hours in the office getting ready for what was a busy weekend of prep coverage ahead. It was the first action after Christmas break and I was ready to get back into the swing of things.

That never took place.

My bosses came into my office early that afternoon to inform me I was being let go. The job of covering Louisburg athletics was no longer mine. I packed up my things, turned in my key, went home, punched the wall a couple times and cried.

I was scared.

After all the tears came the questions. How was I going to support my family? What am I going to do for a job? The list went on and on and I couldn't come up with many answers.

As it turned out, one of the worst experiences of my life turned into one of the best.

Thanks to a lot of prayers, and support from family and friends, I decided to start Louisburg Sports Zone. Yep, that's right, I went from being unemployed to starting my own business for the first time in my life.

Not exactly the best way to alleviate fears.

However, when I kicked off the site just a month later, I was overwhelmed with the amount of support from students at Louisburg High School, employees throughout the district, parents and several others who offered encouragement and supported my new venture.

I finished the last half of the winter season and all of the spring doing what I took for granted the previous seven years. I got the chance to cover Louisburg athletics again.

You know, this whole starting your own business thing might not have been a bad idea after all. I would have never had the courage to go out on my own had I not been pushed in that direction.

Fast forward to the present and I am still alive and kicking, ready to start my eighth season of roaming the Wildcat sidelines with camera in hand, waiting to tell that next story.

This fall brings a lot of story lines to the Wildcat programs. The football team is looking to improve off its 3-win season a year ago and find its way back to the playoffs with a veteran group returning.

Volleyball is primed and ready to make its fourth consecutive state tournament this year after placing in the top four in the last three years. The Lady Cats return five seniors that have a lot of state experience and that bodes well for another

trip to Salina.

The Wildcat soccer team returns an experienced group from a year ago as they try to crack the top of the Frontier League standings. The cross country team also has several returning runners who will try and qualify for the state meet.

There is a lot to be excited about when it comes to Louisburg sports, but for me personally, I am just fortunate enough to still be a part of it in a small way.

I take a lot of pride in what I do and I hope that it shows when you read stories or look at pictures on this site. I started this business knowing that I will never be rich, but it gives me an opportunity to continue to do what I love.

Thanks to all those who have supported me and for the more than 23,000 views on the site in the last six months. I have said it before, but I am extremely blessed to live in a community that supports each other through good times and bad.

Every day I am fortunate enough to be able to go to work and support my family doing what I know how to do. That is all I have ever wanted, so thank you Louisburg for allowing me to do it.

I am still scared, though.

It is that fear that drives me to do the best I can in what I do in my job and in life. I don't want what happened on that day in January to happen again and I will do everything to make sure it doesn't.

Right now I am living the good life. I have the opportunity to work for myself, support my family and do what I enjoy. I can't ask for any more.

I am living the American dream.

I just don't want to wake up.

Lady Cats prepare for another state run



Senior Cate Stambaugh sends a shot over the net over the outstretched arms of teammates Anna Dixon (left) and Olivia Bradley during Louisburg volleyball team camp on July 16. Five seniors return to help guide the Lady Cats to what they hope is another state tournament appearance.

Going to the state tournament the last three years, and four of the last five, doesn't just happen overnight.

For the Louisburg High School volleyball team, it takes dedication and a lot of hours in the gym trying to perfect its craft. The Lady Cats have spent those hours participating in summer leagues, going to team camps and working hard in the weight room.

Their busy summer ended with the Louisburg team camp last week as 29 Lady Cats were in the gym for three hours in the afternoon for five days trying to build chemistry and preparing for the start of the season, which begins in mid-August.

"The athletes and the coaching staff are ready to get the season started," Louisburg coach Jessica Compliment said. "They have put in a lot of work in the offseason, and this summer, and are ready to see what this upcoming season will bring."



Senior Megan Lemke goes up for a kill attempt on July 16 during the Louisburg volleyball team camp.

"We have discussed goals and expectations, and they know where they want to be at the end of the season. They also understand that nothing will be handed to them. They will need to work harder than everyone else throughout the season in order to put them in a good place at the end of the season. This is a great group of athletes that work very well together, and I am excited to see what can be accomplished."

Louisburg has put in a lot of preparation this summer as it had three teams participate in summer leagues and were able to compete in numerous matches the last two months.

The Lady Cats also made the trip to Topeka to compete in the Washburn University Team Camp as they played in 12 matches

over the course of two days. According to Compliment, the players have also hit the weight room along with playing club volleyball on their own time.

“There has been some improvement from where the athletes left off at the end of the 2014 season,” she said. “We have quite a few that stay active in the off season which helps them start their summer off well. I am excited to see how the team comes together once we start official practices in August.”

Last year, the Lady Cats ended their season with a fourth-place finish at state and have come home with at least a medal in three of the last four state tournament appearances. They hope the hard work over the summer might help get them back to the state tournament for a fourth straight season.

Louisburg certainly has the experience to do it. Seniors Lauren Dunn, Madison Turner, Makenzie Kallevig, Megan Lemke and Cate Stambaugh have all made numerous trips to the state tournament.

For Dunn, she is aiming for her fourth straight trip to state as she was a part of the Class 4A Division I state runner up team two years ago and has also earned two fourth-place medals as well. Dunn, along with Turner and Kallevig, have started the last two seasons for Louisburg and Compliment hopes that experience will help give them an edge this year.

“We have quite a few returning seniors from last year’s squad,” Compliment said. “Each of the seniors have made either three or two trips to state, and they are setting their goals high again this year. We have three returning who have been starters for the past two seasons. I’ll be looking to them to lead the team this year.

“We lost two dynamic seniors (Sydney Dixon and Bailey Dvorak) from last year, and we’ll need these seniors to step up and play their roles. There is a wealth of experience returning so I am hopeful that we can start the season strong and continue

to develop throughout the season.”

Summer camp information

Summer camps at Louisburg High School aren't too far away and here is some information if you are interested in signing up.

FOOTBALL

LHS football coach Kyle Littrell is holding his team camp on June 15 through 19 on the team's practice field just outside the high school. The cost for the high school camp is \$45 and includes insurance, a T-shirt and shorts.

Littrell will also conduct a middle school and elementary school camp. The seventh and eighth-grade camp will run from 10 a.m. to noon on June 15 through 18 and will cost \$35. There will also be an elementary camp from 8:30 to 10 a.m. on June 15-17 for grades 3-6 and will cost \$25. Both camp fees include a T-shirts.

For more information, contact Littrell at 837-1720 or littrellk@usd416.org.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Head boys basketball coach Jason Nelson is conducting his team camp from 2 to 4:30 p.m. on June 8 through 12 in the LHS gymnasium. The cost for the high school camp is \$50 and includes a T-shirt.

Nelson will also hold a junior high and elementary school camp

as well. The session for sixth through eighth-grade will run from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on June 8 through 11 and the cost is \$45. The third through fifth-grade camp will run from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on June 8 through 10 and is \$40. Both camps include a T-shirt.

All three camps will have a heavy emphasis on fundamentals. The due date to sign up is May 23. For more information, contact Nelson at (913) 963-8421 or nelsonj@usd416.org.

VOLLEYBALL

LHS head volleyball coach Jessica Compliment will hold camps from fifth-grade on up through high school this July.

On July 13 through 17, Compliment will conduct the high school camp from 1 to 4 p.m. and the cost is \$45. The seventh and eighth-grade camp will run from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on July 13 through 16 and costs \$35. The fifth and sixth-grade session will go from 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. on July 13 through 15 and costs \$30.

Deadline to sign-up for the camps is May 15 and all costs include a camp T-shirt. For more information, contact Compliment at (785) 766-3758 or complimentj@usd416.org.

WRESTLING

LHS head wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird will conduct a beginners and advanced camp on June 22 through June 25 in the LHS gymnasium

The beginners camp is for novice and youth wrestlers and will run from 5 to 7 p.m. each day. The minimum age is 6-years-old. Children who will be in kindergarten or first grade must have adult supervision.

The advanced camp will run from 7 to 9:15 p.m. for high school, middle school and experienced youth wrestlers. The cost for both camps is \$35 and includes a T-shirt. Deadline to register is June 1.

For more information, contact Bovaird at (913) 424-0999 or bovairdr@usd416.org

GIRLS SOCCER

The LHS girls soccer program will prepare for its inaugural season this summer. Head coach Kyle Conley is holding a high school camp from 10 a.m. to noon on June 15 through 19 along with assistant coach Michael Pickman.

The cost for the camp is \$40, which includes a T-shirt. Campers will need to bring shin-guards and a water bottle. Deadline to sign-up is May 15. For more information contact Conley at conleyk@usd416.org.

BOYS SOCCER

Head coach Ben York will be conducting his high school team camp on July 13 through 17. The cost for the camp is \$50. For more information, contact York at benyork13@gmail.com.