

Wildcats battle their way to fourth place state finish



The Louisburg volleyball team celebrates a big point during the Class 4A Kansas State Volleyball Championships on Friday in Hutchinson.

HUTCHINSON – For the second time in as many years, Louisburg is leaving the state volleyball tournament with some hardware.

The Wildcats, for the second straight season, finished fourth Saturday at the Class 4A Kansas State Volleyball Championships in Hutchinson. It marked the 20th appearance for the Wildcats in the tournament.

Getting that hardware and making it to Saturday was certainly a battle for the Wildcats, who had to fight through adversity during pool play on Friday. Louisburg had to deal with injuries and had its fate rest in another team's hands.

Despite all that, Louisburg left with a fourth place medal following a tough 23-25, 25-8 and 25-16 loss to Andale in the third-place match Saturday at Hutchinson Sports Arena.

"We are very proud of this team for making it back to the

state tournament and finishing in the final four again," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "We, of course, will always strive for higher finishes until we reach that ultimate goal of state champions, but we are proud of where we finished the season and were happy with the success of this team."



Members of the Louisburg volleyball team are (from left) Adelyn Moore, Caileigh Kilgore, McKenna Lohse, Delaney Nelsen, Aspen Coulter, Evyn Richardson, Ashlyn Berck, Katie Elpers, Izzy Moreland, Megan Quinn, Hailey Sword, Madie Williams and head coach Leanna Willer.

Louisburg opened pool play on Friday against the eventual state-runner up in McPherson. The Wildcats lost in two sets, 25-22 and 25-18, and needed a win in its next match against No. 2 seed Towanda-Circle.

After Circle defeated Louisburg three times last season, the Wildcats got their revenge in a competitive 26-24 and 25-22 victory. A win in their next match against Holton would have given the Wildcats a spot in the semifinals.

However, after Louisburg took the first set 31-29, Holton won the next two, 25-22 and 25-19. Midway through the match, senior Madie Williams also suffered an ankle injury and had to sit the rest of the match and on Saturday.

"Watching a player get injured is always heartbreakin, and especially a senior at the state tournament," Willer said. "It was emotional for everyone, knowing how badly Madie wanted to finish out the season. That being said, we have a team of 12 fully capable girls, so it was great to see other players step in and rise to the occasion in her place. Every role on the team is vital, and it just goes to show that you never know when it will be your time to shine."



Louisburg senior Hailey Sword sends a shot over the net Friday against McPherson.

That loss left Louisburg's record at 1-2 and many of the

players had come to the realization that their season was over. The Wildcats needed McPherson to beat Circle in two sets in its next match to win the tiebreaker between Circle and Holton.

McPherson was happy to oblige as it defeated Circle, 2-0, and the Wildcats were onto the state semifinals.

“Friday’s pool play round was a bit crazy – it’s not often we see a three-way 1-2 tie like we had,” Willer said. “When we lost that last set to Holton, I know the girls were extremely upset, but our first message to them was that there’s still a chance of us making it. It’s always sad to think that this could be the last time we played together, but we were so glad to have the opportunity to play together for one more day. All of us coaches had a really good feeling that it would happen, especially considering how great McPherson had been playing all day. They beat Circle in two sets and sealed the deal for us to continue on to Saturday.”

The Wildcats’ reward for making it to Saturday – facing off with the defending state champion, Bishop Miege, in the semifinals. The Stags handed Louisburg a 25-10 and 25-17 loss and the Wildcats moved to the third place game against Andale.



Louisburg senior Izzy Moreland converges at the net with two Andale players Saturday in Hutchinson.

Louisburg's loss to Miege didn't get them down as the Wildcats responded to take the first set against Andale, but the Indians rallied to win the next two.

"We came out fired up for that third place match," Willer said. "We started off very strong from the service line and we were successful in taking them out of system, which allowed us to set up a strong defense and convert it to offense. In the second set, Andale came back firing on all cylinders, which took us back a little bit. It took us some time to get back in our groove and feeling confident, but I am proud of how hard we fought in the third. Regardless of the score and the outcome, we wanted to enjoy our last game together and give it our all."

Several Wildcats contributed to the successful state tournament and it started at the net. Senior Hailey Sword led the Wildcats offensive attack with 32 kills and sophomore Caileigh Kilgore added 29.

Williams had 23 kills in limited action, while sophomore Delaney Nelsen finished with 18.



Louisburg setter Megan Quinn sends the ball over the net Friday during pool play.

The Wildcat hitters were given good opportunities thanks to setters Megan Quinn and Adelyn Moore. Quinn led Louisburg with 61 assists in her final match and Moore tallied 54.

Louisburg was also strong from behind the service line as Moore had a team-high seven aces in the five matches and Sword added six.

Defensively, senior Izzy Moreland played big up front with a team-high five blocks, while Nelsen and sophomore McKenna Lohse each had four.

Nelsen also registered a team-best 40 digs and senior libero Ashlyn Berck had 34. Sword had 33 and Williams finished with 31.

Wildcats looking forward to challenge of state tourney



The Louisburg volleyball team is hoping for another celebration like this one following the Class 4A Kansas State Volleyball Championship this weekend in Hutchinson.

Louisburg is no stranger to the state volleyball tournament, especially after the Wildcats punched their ticket for the 20th time in school history following last Saturday's sub-state victory.

Going to state is more of an expectation than anything else

for Louisburg, but that doesn't mean the excitement level is anything but high going into this weekend Class 4A Kansas State Volleyball Championships in Hutchinson.

The Wildcats are making their second straight trip to the state tournament, and it's 10th time in the last 13 years. As much fun as a sub-state title is, they have shifted their focus on the task at hand.

"As soon as we walked in the gym on Monday, we were focused on state," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "We are very excited about the sub-state wins, but we have been working all week in getting ready for Friday and right now we are focused on ourselves and how we can get better."

No. 6 Louisburg (24-14) opens pool play at 3:30 p.m. on Friday when it faces No. 3 McPherson (29-9) at Hutchinson Sports Arena. The top two teams in each pool will advance to the state semifinals Saturday afternoon.

Experience could play a role in the Wildcats' success this weekend as they return three starters from last season's team that placed fourth at state.

Senior setter Megan Quinn, along with all-around players Hailey Sword and Madie Williams, played big parts on both teams and that experience could be vital.



Louisburg senior Hailey Sword runs in to dig up a ball last week at sub-state.

“Definitely having that experience settles some of our younger players,” Quinn said. “We have been there before so we kind of know what to expect. I even had older sisters that played at state and was there to watch them, so we know what it is going to be like and we know what it is going to take to win there. We had some good matches there last year and we want to come out on top this time.”

Similar to a season ago, the Wildcats got off to a slow start, but were able to find their footing come postseason time and they hope that momentum carries over into state.

“Last year going to state, we showed that we don’t have to be the biggest or the best team, we just have to work our butt off and compete,” Sword said. “We have tried to pass that on to some of the younger players this year. We might not look the best, but we can compete with anyone out there.”

The Wildcats appeared to find the right combination last Saturday as they earned a sweep over Paola and then against Independence in the sub-state championship.

With Sword, Williams and sophomore Delaney Nelsen playing all the way around, the Wildcats have also run a 2-setter system all season with Quinn and freshman Adelyn Moore.



Senior libero Ashlyn Berck digs up a ball during sub-state last week.

Louisburg also has strong defense in the back with senior libero Ashlyn Berck and senior Izzy Moreland as the team's middle blocker with Nelsen. Sophomores Caileigh Kilgore and McKenna Lohse have also stepped up as the team's right side

hitters.

"It did take awhile for us to find our groove and figure out the right fit of girls out on the court," Willer said. "It is still changing a little bit, but what they have done a good job of is no matter who is out there, they are going to figure it out and make the best of it. I started to see a little bit of change in the Ottawa tournament and I think the girls realized what is going to make us successful. Then especially on Senior Night it showed even more. Tonganoxie is a great team, we were pretty solid during that whole game."

The Wildcats will have to come together once more to start pool play Friday as they play another team that is familiar to the state tournament – McPherson. The Bullpups are also making their 20th trip to state.

Louisburg will then face Towanda-Circle at 6:30 p.m. – a team that defeated the Wildcats three times last season – including twice at the state tournament. The Wildcats will end pool play at 7:30 against Holton.

"McPherson has a history of being strong at volleyball," Willer said. "They are a program like us where they have a history of being solid every year, and even though their record hasn't been like what it has in the past, they have that sense of tradition like we do. Going to state is an expectation and the goal. We have tried to watch as much film as we can and I think it will be a good matchup for us."

"Circle we know from last year and they easily won their sub-state. They seemed to have our number last year, so hopefully this group can come out and avenge what happened a year ago. Holton pulled an upset in their sub-state and we were in that similar position last year. They will come ready to play and they have some height so we are going to have to work getting around the block. We are just focusing on bettering what we can control and how we can improve."



Louisburg senior Izzy Moreland goes up for a kill last week at sub-state.

Throw in teams from the other pool – No. 1 Clearwater (35-3), No. 4 Eudora (23-8), No. 5 Andale (27-10) and No. 8 Bishop Miege (19-17) – and it looks to be a competitive state tournament.

“Everyone there has a good chance at getting to the finals,” Williams said. “If we just stay focused, I think we have as good of a chance as anyone there. We can’t look at what team is ranked what and worry about that, we just need to go out and play our best volleyball in order to beat everyone. We can’t take anyone for granted and anyone can beat us. At the same time, I think if we play well we can beat anyone.”

As for what the Wildcats will have to do to be successful, it all starts with defense.

“We have to win the serve and pass game and that is what everything comes down to,” Willer said. “We have been working

really hard on defense. We have the offensive tools when our passing and defense is there. Even if things aren't going our way, we just need to find a way to regroup and shake it off and refocus. We can't let the moment get too big."

BACK-TO-BACK: Wildcats win second straight sub-state title



Senior Ashlyn Berck hoists the Class 4A sub-state championship plaque Saturday following Louisburg's 2-0 win over Independence at Independence High School.

INDEPENDENCE – Louisburg has a prolific history when it comes to making the state volleyball tournament.

The Wildcats added that resume Saturday in Independence.

Louisburg, the No. 7 seed, rolled through No. 2 Independence in the sub-state championship match, 25-17 and 25-20, to earn

its second straight sub-state title. The Wildcats defeated No. 10 Paola, 25-22 and 25-18, in semifinals

"It meant so much to win sub-state, especially with this team," Louisburg senior Megan Quinn said. "I have so much love for this team and I was not ready to say goodbye to the girls yet. I felt that our team played really good all around on Saturday and that we connected the best we have all season."

The Wildcats are no stranger to one of volleyball's biggest stages as this will be the 20th time in school history that they have qualified for the state tournament.



Members of the Louisburg sub-state championship team are (front row, from left) Madie Williams, Izzy Moreland, Ashlyn Berck, Megan Quinn, Hailey Sword, Katie Elpers; (back row) managers Hanna Veres and Kira Kundt, McKenna Lohse, Evyn Richardson, Caileigh Kilgore, Adelyn Moore, Delaney Nelsen, Aspen Coulter and head coach Leanna Willer.

"Winning back-to-back sub-state championships is not an easy feat, and we are so proud of this team for pushing through

different adversities all season long and coming together on Saturday to leave it all out on the floor," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "We are so excited to continue the tradition of excellence in volleyball in Louisburg and to represent our school and community at the state tournament."

Their quest for a state tournament berth began with Paola in the sub-state semifinals – a team they had beaten twice already this year – and the Wildcats found themselves with their back's against the wall early.

Paola held an 18-13 advantage in the first set and had all the momentum. A loss for Louisburg would have meant they would have had to win the next two.

Instead, the Wildcats made the plays when they needed them most.

Senior Madie Williams started the run with a kill and an ace, then dug a ball up on a return, setter Adelyn Moore chased it down and then Izzy Moreland reached down and sent the ball over the net with her fist. That led a Paola error and another point.

Moreland followed it up with a block and then Paola sent a hit out of bounds and the match was tied at 18-all. The Panthers responded to take the next two points, but the Wildcats rallied again.



Sophomore Delaney Nelsen dives to dig up a ball Saturday at Independence.

Sophomore McKenna Lohse got a kill from the right side and senior Ashlyn Berck followed with an ace to tie it at 20. Paola responded with a kill to make it 21-20, but Lohse tied it up with a kill over own.

The Wildcats ended the match on a 4-1 run after a tip by senior Hailey Sword, a kill from Williams and a tip from sophomore Caileigh Kilgore. That win put all the pressure on Paola.

"It is really tough to beat a team three times in a row, especially a team like Paola as they have grown over the season," Williams said. "Overall, I think staying calm and letting our team know that we would be fine as long as we continued to give 100 percent effort throughout the rest of the set really helped give us the winning mindset. We all reminded each other to keep the energy up and just erase those

past mistakes, and that's what really got us to the championship."

Louisburg didn't let up in the second set as the Wildcats jumped out to an 8-3 lead and never looked back. Paola cut the lead to one on a couple different occasions, but the Wildcats were able to hold on.

Williams led the Wildcats from her all-around position as she finished with 11 kills and tied for a team-high eight digs. Sword was second on the team with eight digs, while sophomore Delaney Nelsen and Lohse each added four.



Louisburg senior Megan Quinn sets up a teammate for a kill Saturday at Independence.

Quinn and freshman Adelyn Moore set up their hitters well. Quinn had a team-high 14 assists and Moore finished with 10. Moore also had eight digs.

“Beating any team three times is a challenge, and our rivalry with Paola always results in a high energy, competitive match,” Willer said. “We knew that they would come at us with everything they had, and they sure did. I think our nerves were apparent in that first set as it took us a little while to find our groove, but getting the comeback victory in set 1 was a huge momentum builder for us and it carried over into the second set giving us that extra push to finish the game in two.”

Against Independence in the championship, it was all Louisburg. Sword led the way with a team-high 12 kills. Lohse finished with five and Williams added four of her own.

Defensively, Moreland had a team-high three blocks in the tournament, while Williams had a team-best nine digs.

Moore had a team-high 12 assists and Quinn added eight to go along with six digs.



Louisburg senior Madie Williams goes up for a block.

The Wildcats also thrived from behind the service line with eight aces, including two each from Moore and Nelsen.

“It meant everything to me that we won substate, given me another week to play with my family,” Sword said. “I think the team played pretty well with ups and downs, but this team is definitely playing better every time we get on the court. I am super excited for state.”

It was an all-around team effort for Louisburg on the day and it started up front with Sword and Williams. The impacts continued on down the roster.

“Hailey and Madie both had great games on Saturday as they were our attack leaders and both made big plays in the back row and in serve receive,” Willer said. “They are asked to do a lot for our team as six-rotation players, so their leadership and dependability on the court is very important to the success of our team.

“Megan and Adelyn both ran our offense according to our game plan and did a great job of finding our hitters at the right time in the right place. Ashlyn had a great day on serve receive and McKenna stepped up big-time on the right side for us and had two great games. Delaney served tough all day long, led the team in aces, and did a great job getting the other teams out-of-system. Izzy did a great job being big at the net and leading the team in blocks.”



Louisburg senior Hailey Sword had a team-high 12 kills against Independence on Saturday.

Now, the Wildcats will prepare for the state tournament as they open with pool play Friday at the Hutchinson Sports Arena.

Louisburg earned the No. 6 seed and will square off with No. 3 McPherson first at 3:30 p.m. The Wildcats will then meet Towanda-Circle at 6:30 and No. 7 Holton at 7:30.

The top two teams in each pool will advance to the state semifinals at 1 p.m. on Saturday.

“Friday will bring some big match-ups for us, as the state tournament should,” Willer said. “McPherson is historically a very successful volleyball team and they have a lot of experience at the state tournament. We are looking forward to facing Towanda-Circle again this year. That is a team who just seemed to have our number last year, so our girls are fired up to avenge last year’s team.

"Lastly, Holton will be a great match-up for us. They upset the No. 1 seed in the East in Rock Creek at sub-state, so we are excited to have the opportunity to play them. We are going to need to be playing our best volleyball together as a team to finish in the top 2 in our pool to move on to Saturday's bracket."

Week 8 Athlete of the Week: Hailey Sword



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week eight of the fall sports season, sponsored by IronHorse Family and Cosmetic Dentistry.

HAILEY SWORD, SENIOR, VOLLEYBALL

Louisburg senior Hailey Sword helped the Wildcat volleyball team earn their second straight bid to the Class 4A state tournament last week. On Saturday at the Class 4A sub-state tournament in Independence, Louisburg downed Paola and

Independence in two sets to win the title and Sword was a big reason why.

Sword led the Wildcat attack at the net with a team-high 20 kills in the two matches and was second on the team with two aces. She has been big for Louisburg all season from her all-around position. Sword leads the team with 276 kills on the year and is second on the Wildcats with 262 digs.

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday morning during the fall season and the winner is selected by Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.

Previous winners:

Week 1: Declan Battle

Week 2: Megan Quinn

Week 3: Maddy Rhamy

Week 4: Emmett White

Week 5: Ashton Moore

Week 6: Madie Williams

Week 7: Noah Cotter

The collage consists of four business cards and a QR code arranged in a 2x2 grid. The top-left card is for Ironhorse Family & Cosmetic Dentistry, featuring a horse logo and the text 'IRONHORSE FAMILY & COSMETIC DENTISTRY'. The top-right card is for Dr. Laura's Orthodontics, featuring a sun logo and the text 'Dr. Laura's Orthodontics LOVE YOUR SMILE'. The bottom-left card is a QR code with a horse logo in the center. The bottom-right card is a photo of a smiling family of four (two adults and two children) with the text 'Comfortable dental care for the entire family' and 'No shots, no drills, no pain' below it. The text 'We offer sedation dentistry' and 'Orthodontics, TMJ and Sleep Apnea Treatment' is also present. The QR code on the left is red.

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Wildcats sweep Wamego, Olathe North to end regular season



Louisburg sophomore Delaney Nelsen goes up for the kill attempt Thursday during the Wildcats' home match against Olathe North.

In its final contest before the postseason, the Louisburg volleyball team had a chance to exact a little revenge.

The Wildcats happily took advantage of the opportunity on their home floor.

On Thursday, Louisburg rallied to defeat Olathe North, 19-25, 25-16 and 25-22 and avenged a loss from earlier this season. Prior to that, the Wildcats defeated Wamego 25-14 and 25-10 to end the regular season with a pair of victories.

“Any time we are able to get a ‘revenge rematch,’ we love having the opportunity to show our growth and push to get the win the second time around,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “I think it means a little bit more, knowing that we have something to prove. Olathe North is a solid team who came to battle that night, and I am proud of our team for pushing through the three sets after dropping the first. We rallied together as a team for the comeback, and that’s always fun to watch.”

After splitting the first two sets, Olathe North had a 22-19 lead in the deciding third set and had the momentum on its side. Louisburg, however, was quickly able to take it back.

The Wildcats ended the match on a 6-0 run that included two kills from Hailey Sword and a block from Delaney Nelsen. Megan Quinn served the final six points, including an ace.

Sword had a big night all-around for Louisburg as she notched a team-high 10 kills in the match and also had two aces and 10 digs.

Madie Williams also made her presence known all over the floor for the Wildcats. She tallied a team-high 14 digs and three aces to go along with seven kills.



Louisburg senior Izzy Moreland goes up for a block Thursday against Olathe North.

Freshman Adelyn Moore and Quinn set up their hitters well as they had a combined 26 assists, including 17 from Moore.

“Finishing our regular season with two wins last week was a great way to cap off the season and head into the postseason with confidence,” Willer said. “Playing on a day with no school is always a challenge, but we came in ready to go and the girls were fired up. We are working hard this week to ensure that we are playing our best volleyball come Saturday, keeping that energy alive.”

Against Wamego, Louisburg got out to a fast start in an easy 2-0 win to begin the triangular. Sword led the way with five kills and Williams finished with four.

Quinn and Moore had 10 and seven assists, respectively, while

Williams had a team-high eight digs. Quinn and Nelsen each had two aces as the Wildcats had seven in the match.

Louisburg (22-14) now prepares for the Class 4A sub-state tournament. The Wildcats are the No. 7 seed and will square off with No. 10 Paola at 3 p.m. Saturday at Independence High School.

The championship match is scheduled for 4 p.m. as the Wildcats try to head back to the state tournament after their fourth place finish a season ago.

"We are very excited for the postseason," Willer said. "We have a ton of fun traditions leading up to sub-state, but the main focus of the week is preparing ourselves to play our best volleyball yet this weekend. All of the time and energy we've put in throughout the season has led us to this one week where what really matters are the people next to you – giving it your all for your teammates is what this is all about. We are looking forward to the opportunity to earn ourselves a spot back at the state tournament in Hutchinson."

Wildcat volleyball finishes runner-up at Atchison Invitational



The Louisburg volleyball team finished with a 4-1 record Saturday at the Atchison Invitational and brought home a second place plaque.

ATCHISON – In its final regular season tournament of the year, the Louisburg volleyball team put together a strong showing as it inches closer to the postseason.

The Wildcats traveled to the Atchison Invitational and left with a runner-up plaque Saturday as they finished the tournament with a 4-1 record.

“This was a fun new tournament for us to join with a lot of teams we don’t see very often,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “Overall, I think we played well and showed up ready to show everyone what Louisburg volleyball is all about. It was a long day, and we faced our fair share of moments where we had to push through a tough moment, but we rallied together and played hard each match. It’s always nice to come home with some hardware.”

Louisburg went 3-0 in pool play and it started with a 25-17 and 25-10 win over Junction City. The Wildcats followed that up with a 25-5 and 25-17 victory over Atchison and a 25-18 and 25-10 win over Atchison County Community.

Those wins pushed the Wildcats into the semifinals where they

squared off with Paola. The Panthers pushed Louisburg to three sets, but the Wildcats came through with a 25-22, 23-25 and 25-16 win and they advanced to the championship against Perry-Lecompton.

The Wildcats battled a talented Perry-Lecompton squad, but came up short in a 25-23, 23-25 and 25-18 loss.

“Perry-Lecompton is a strong 3A team who has a couple of stud players,” Willer said. “They came out with a lot of energy, they played some relentless defense, and they have some strong offensive weapons that can put the ball away. The game was fun to play because they were a great match for us – it was very even all throughout. Unfortunately, we did not come out on top in the end, but we fought hard and left it all out there on the floor. I’m proud of how hard they played.”

Throughout the tournament, the Wildcats featured a balanced attack on offense and it started with seniors Madie Williams and Hailey Sword. Williams finished with 36 kills over the five matches and Sword added 33.

Sophomore Caileigh Kilgore tallied 22 kills, while sophomore Delaney Nelsen and senior Izzy Moreland had 16 and 13, respectively.

Senior Megan Quinn and freshman Adelyn Moore set up the hitters well. Quinn had a team-high 62 assists and Moore added 45.

Nelsen was strong from behind the service line as she had 14 aces in the tournament, while Williams and Quinn each added eight.

Defensively, Moreland, Kilgore and Nelsen each had five blocks to lead Louisburg. Sword had a team-high 46 digs, Williams had 32 and Nelsen finished with 29.

“We played well together as a team throughout the day and

leaned on different players during different games," Willer said. "Our setters did a good job of running the offense and implementing what we've been working on in practice. We were able to serve tough and get a lot of the other teams out of system throughout the day, all of which helped get us to the championship and playing better each game."

The Wildcats will hit the court one final time in the regular season this Thursday when they host Olathe North and Wamego in a triangular. Matches begin at 5 p.m.

Week 6 Athlete of the Week: Madie Williams



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week six of the fall sports season, sponsored by Landmark National Bank.

MADIE WILLIAMS, SENIOR, VOLLEYBALL

Louisburg senior Madie Williams helped lead the Wildcat volleyball team to a big week that included a second place finish at the Atchison Invitational on Saturday. Louisburg had a successful stretch that included a revenge win over Tonganoxie and then five straight wins at Atchison.

Williams was a big part of that success and she had a team-high 48 kills during those six matches as she played all six rotations. Williams was also second on the team with 50 digs and was strong from behind the service line with eight aces. On the season, Williams leads the team with 35 aces is second on the team in kills (237) and digs (234).

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday morning during the fall season and the winner is selected by Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.

Previous winners:

Week 1: Declan Battle

Week 2: Megan Quinn

Week 3: Maddy Rhamy

Week 4: Emmett White

Week 5: Ashton Moore



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Wildcats get revenge win over Tonganoxie on Senior Night



Louisburg celebrates a big point from Hailey Sword during the Wildcats' 3-1 victory Tuesday over Tonganoxie on Senior Night.

On a night where Louisburg volleyball had a chance to honor its six seniors, the Wildcats also got the opportunity to exact a little revenge.

Coming off a tough tournament performance Saturday, Louisburg had a chance to avenge one of its losses from that day on Tuesday when it hosted Tonganoxie.

The Wildcats played like a different team as they downed the Chieftains, 3-1, and improved their record to 16-13 on the season.

"This was a big win for us," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "Our girls came in very determined to beat them. We lost to them over the weekend, but didn't play our best. We knew that we had it in us to win, and everyone wanted to win for the seniors on senior night as well."

Louisburg honored seniors Ashlyn Berck, Katie Elpers, Izzy Moreland, Megan Quinn, Hailey Sword and Madie Williams and their parents prior to the match. All of those seniors made an impact in some way in the 25-20, 25-22, 12-25 and 26-24 victory.



(From left): Louisburg seniors Madie Williams, Izzy Moreland, Hailey Sword, Ashlyn Berck, Megan Quinn and Katie Elpers were all honored Tuesday on Senior Night.

“These seniors have dedicated so much time and energy to our program,” Willer said. “They have each played different roles throughout the years and have been willing to take on whatever role best helps the team to be successful. Many of them have worked really hard to form relationships with our underclassmen and serve as mentors and leaders for the whole team.

“I think the impact they have had on this program was evidenced by the tears shed by all of our underclassmen on senior night who will be so sad to see them go. As none of them are planning to go on and play volleyball at the next level, it means a lot that they have each given so much to a sport that they love to play with each other.”

It was a balanced effort for Louisburg as it jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the match thanks to different players stepping up at the net and on defense.



Louisburg senior Madie Williams goes up for a kill Tuesday against Tonganoxie.

Williams led the Louisburg attack with 12 kills on the night from her all-around spot, while Sword and sophomore Delaney Nelsen each had eight. Morland and Elpers added seven and six kills, respectively, and sophomore Caileigh Kilgore added five.

Quinn and freshman Adelyn Moore ran the offense well. Quinn led the way with 24 assists on the night and Moore finished with 15.

"I think we were able to really implement the balanced attack idea that we've been talking about all season," Willer said. "Our setters did a great job of finding each hitter and putting them in a position to be successful. Everyone contributed, which helps make it easier to find a single

blocker and holes in the defense on the other side."

Defensively, several Wildcats made big plays throughout the night.



Senior libero Ashlyn Berck dives on the floor to dig up a ball Tuesday at home.

Along with leading the team in kills, Williams also had a team-best 18 digs and Sword was right behind her with 17. Quinn and Nelsen each had 14 and Moore contributed nine.

Berck also had a big night from behind the service line as she tallied a team-high five aces.

"Our defense stepped up throughout the night, and we made the conscious decision to be nothing but relentless in our pursuit," Willer said. "After the third set, our captains talked to the team about how defense was going to win this game and that we just really needed to leave it all out on the floor. Their leadership in those efforts were definitely

noticed, and their challenge to the team had everyone rising to the occasion."

The Wildcats got out to a pair of relatively easy wins in the first two sets, but the Chieftains controlled the third to keep the match alive.

Louisburg got right back on track as the Wildcats jumped out to a 7-3 lead in the fourth. However, the Chieftains made a run of their own to grab a 16-13 advantage.



Senior Izzy Moreland goes up for a kill Tuesday against Tonganoxie.

Moreland responded with back-to-back kills and then a Tonganoxie net violation tied the match. The Chieftains went back up 18-16, but again the Wildcats rallied with a kill from Sword and Williams.

Berck then added an ace to put Louisburg up 19-18. The lead would change hands a couple different times, but the Wildcats took a 24-22 advantage on a pair of Nelsen kills.

Tonganoxie tied the match again at 24-all, but Moreland notched a kill on a set from Quinn and then the Chieftains were called for under the net to give the Wildcats the win.

"Overall, I think we played well and toughed it out on defense to pull out the win," Willer said. "We showed a lot of heart, and I am proud of the way that we were able to bounce back from mistakes or big plays that they made to answer with big plays of our own."

Louisburg is back in action this Saturday when the Wildcats travel to the Atchison Invitational.

Wildcats go 1-4 at Ottawa

Louisburg competed at the Ottawa Invitational last Saturday and got out to a great start, which included a revenge win over Ottawa to start the day.

Unfortunately for the Wildcats, it was the only victory they could garner on the day as they fell to Basehor-Linwood, Maize South, Bishop Miege and Tonganoxie.

The Wildcats fought hard for much of the day, including taking a set from the defending state champion – Bishop Miege.

"The Ottawa tournament is always filled with tough competition, and this year was no different," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "We started the morning off by beating Ottawa after losing to them a couple of weeks ago, so it's always nice to get that 'revenge' win. The biggest positives on the day were that we competed hard with each team and battled through some tough sets."

"We took a set from Bishop Miege, and in all of our matches we

fought hard to stay in the game, we just didn't quite have the power to pull off the wins in the end. We are looking forward to cleaning up some aspects of the game in practice this week and putting some more tallies in the win column."

Louisburg sweeps Paola, falls to Spring Hill in league duals



Louisburg senior Hailey Sword rises up for a kill last Tuesday during the Wildcats' home match against Paola.

The Louisburg volleyball team ventured back into Frontier League action last week and finished with a split of Paola and Spring Hill.

The one victory was a big one as the Wildcats swept rival Paola, 25-17, 25-14 and 25-18, last Tuesday at home to get their 14th win on the season.

It was also the Wildcats' Pink-Out Night as they raised money to support a local family battling cancer. Louisburg coach Leanna Willer couldn't have asked for a better outcome for her team.

"Beating Paola is always a good feeling with the natural rivalry between our two schools," Willer said. "I thought the girls came out with some fire and energy that carried us through the night. It was awesome to see how confident we played as girls were going up to swing with no fear and really terminating quite well throughout the match."

The Wildcats were down two starters due to injury, but several players picked up the slack, including Hailey Sword. The Louisburg senior registered a team-high 13 kills was second on the team with 13 digs. She also added a pair of aces.

"Hailey had a great night," Willer said. "Her court awareness keeps improving, and she's a very smart hitter that can find the open spot on the other side. She's also very skilled in knowing when to just get up and swing hard, which was evident in many of her kills on Tuesday. She's an all-around player that can really energize this team when she gets going, so we are excited to see what we get from her down the stretch."



Setter Megan Quinn sets up a teammate at the net Tuesday against Paola.

Sophomore Delaney Nelson played all-six rotations for Louisburg and was especially strong on the defensive end with a team-high 17 digs. She also had a team-high four aces and eight kills.

Sophomores Caileigh Kilgore and McKenna Lohse had eight and seven kills, respectively. Senior Megan Quinn tallied a team-best 22 assists and freshman Adelyn Moore had 16.

Moore also finished with nine digs on the night and senior libero Ashlyn Berck added seven.

“One of the biggest positives of the night was just our overall team confidence and chemistry,” Willer said. “Everyone on the court and on the bench were locked into the game and cheering for each other’s successes, which is exactly what we

need to succeed as a team. We stayed in a great headspace where everyone felt confident in playing their game."

Wildcats drop league match to Spring Hill

Louisburg's schedule got quite a bit tougher Thursday when they Wildcats went on the road to face off with Spring Hill.

The Broncos showed why they are one of the best teams in the Frontier League as they handed Louisburg a 25-16, 25-12 and 25-12 loss.

Sophomores Caileigh Kilgore and Delaney Nelsen led the Wildcats at the net with six kills each. Setter Megan Quinn had 10 assists.

Senior Hailey Sword finished with a team-best seven digs on defense, while senior Ashlyn Berck and freshman Adelyn Moore had six and five, respectively.

Wildcats finish runner-up at home invitational



Louisburg senior Hailey Sword goes up for a kill Saturday during the Louisburg Invitational. The Wildcats finished second at their home tournament with a 3-2 record.

For the second straight season, the Louisburg volleyball team ended its home tournament with a souvenir of sorts – a team plaque.

After a day that featured five matches against bigger programs, Louisburg persevered through some injuries and lineup changes and it resulted in a runner-up finish Saturday in the Louisburg Invitational.

Louisburg ended the day with a 3-2 record that included wins over Shawnee Mission South, Shawnee Mission West and Basehor-Linwood. The Wildcats also lost a tough three-set match to Olathe North and fell in two to Shawnee Mission East.

“Finishing second on the day was great, especially with the level of competition that we bring in for our home tournament,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “None of those games are ever a guaranteed win, and the girls have to battle all day long to maintain playing at a high level.

“Overall, I feel that we played well and rose to the occasion. Every now and then we see glimpses of our inconsistency, but I thought we did a good job of remaining calm and collected

throughout the day and playing as a team."

The Wildcats came out strong to start the day as they opened with a 26-24, 25-20 victory over Shawnee Mission South.

Senior Madie Williams led the attack at the net with 10 kills and senior Hailey Sword followed with seven. Setters Megan Quinn and Adelyn Moore each finished with double-digit assists with 11 and 10, respectively.

Defensively, sophomore Delaney Nelsen and Quinn each led the way with six digs. Junior Evyn Richardson tallied two blocks.



Senior Megan Quinn sets up a teammate at the net Saturday at home.

Against Shawnee Mission West, the Wildcats won going away with a 25-19 and 25-18 victory. Williams and sophomore Caileigh Kilgore were big at the net with six kills each.

Quinn finished with 11 assists to lead the Louisburg attack, while Sword was strong from behind the service line with four aces. Williams finished with a team-high six digs defensively, while senior Ashlyn Berck, Sword and Quinn each had four.

The Wildcats suffered their first setback of the day when they squared off with Olathe North in a 19-25, 25-20 and 25-17 loss to the Eagles.

Williams once again led the Louisburg offense with 10 kills and Sword finished with seven. Nelsen and Kilgore each added six in the loss.

Richardson led the Louisburg defense with four blocks, while sophomore McKenna Lohse – who is filling in for an injured Izzy Moreland – added three blocks along with Kilgore.



Senior libero Ashlyn Berck gets on the floor for a dig

Saturday.

Moore led Louisburg with 16 assists in the match and Quinn tallied 12, while Berck and Williams led the Wildcat back row with nine digs each.

Louisburg got back on the right track in its next match as it downed Basehor-Linwood, 25-18 and 25-22.

Sword and Williams paced the Louisburg offense with eight kills each and Lohse finished with five from her middle blocker spot. Quinn and Moore ran the offense well with 14 and 10 assists, respectively.

Defensively, Berck and Sword each led the way with six digs and senior Katie Elpers had a team-high two blocks.

Due to previous injuries, and ones sustained in the tournament, Willer had to rearrange her lineup at different times and was pleased to see her team still play well despite the different faces.

“Switching the lineup around is always an added challenge, but the girls have done a really great job of being willing to fill whatever role is needed to help the team,” Willer said. “We’ve moved some girls around to try to balance out our crew both offensively and defensively, and they’ve adjusted really nicely. Both Megan and Adelyn have worked hard to form connections with all of our hitters, so it’s great to be able to shift people into different positions and still get solid offensive results.”

In the final game of the round-robin tournament, the Wildcats squared off with Shawnee Mission East in what ended up being the championship match. Unfortunately, the Wildcats couldn’t keep up with the Lancers in the 25-15 and 26-24 loss.



Members of the Louisburg volleyball team that finished second on Saturday are (front row, from left): Adelyn Moore, Aspen Coulter, Ashlyn Berck, Caileigh Kilgore, Madie Williams, Katie Elpers, Izzy Moreland, Delaney Nelsen, Hailey Sword, Evyn Richardson, McKenna Lohse and Megan Quinn.

"I was proud to see us battle in the second set," Willer said. "East sort of let us have it in the first set, and after a long day of volleyball, I was glad to see us fight harder in the second set. Although we fell a little short in the end, we felt proud of leaving it all out there on the floor."

Louisburg (13-8) will be back in action tonight as the Wildcats host rival Paola in a Frontier League matchup. Varsity is set to begin at 6:30 p.m.

Wildcats sweep home triangular

Coming off a league loss to Eudora earlier in the week, the Wildcats got back on the winning track Thursday in their home

triangular.

Louisburg opened with a 2-1 win over Girard, before sweeping Fort Scott 2-0.

"I am proud that we were able to bounce back to get two wins," Willer said. "After the Eudora match, everyone came into Wednesday's practice on a mission, knowing that we had some aspects of our game that we definitely wanted to work on and make adjustments to. It was great to see them work implementing those things."

The Wildcats faced a little adversity against Girard. After Louisburg won the first set 25-18, Girard responded to take the second 25-20. The Wildcats were able to respond with a 25-18 win in the third.

The injury bug also hit Louisburg during the match as the Wildcats lost middle Izzy Moreland with an ankle injury and they were already without senior outside hitter Madie Williams who was battling a knee injury.

Willer brought in sophomore McKenna Lohse to fill in and was pleased to see her play well in Moreland's absence.

"Unfortunately we have been hit with an injury bug lately, and losing Izzy in the middle of the match was a huge bummer for the team as she's been solid for us this year," Willer said. "I think it took us a little bit to get out of the shock and panic of the moment, but then we were able to regroup and continue on. It was also great to have Kenna be able to step up into this role with no hesitation, especially when it happened so suddenly. She did a great job."

Louisburg was solid from behind the service line in the two matches as it combined for 11 aces, including four each from Ashlyn Berck and Delaney Nelsen.

Sophomore Caileigh Kilgore led the Wildcats with 16 kills on

the night and senior Hailey Sword added 14. Senior Katie Elpers and Nelsen finished with 13 and 12, respectively.

Adelyn Moore added a team-high 32 assists to lead the Wildcat offense and senior Megan Quinn tallied 29.

Nelsen and Lohse led the defense as the net with four and three blocks, respectively. In the back row, Berck finished with a team-high 23 digs and Nelsen had 22.

"We saw a lot of positives throughout both matches, but I would say that the other sophomores were standouts to me," Willer said. "Caileigh had a big night finishing with 16 kills. She has established herself as someone we can rely on to put a ball down which is awesome. Delaney also stepped up in a big way as she filled Madie's 6 rotation position. She did a great job of being consistent in all aspects of the game."