

# 2023 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year Nominees



For the sixth consecutive year, Louisburg Sports Zone will be handing out an Athlete of the Year honor to a male and female athlete at Louisburg High School. I wanted the opportunity to recognize those who exemplify what it means to be an “athlete.”

Although I am giving out the award, I wanted the process to be subjective, so I asked the head coaches at LHS to help me out. I asked each coach to send me nominations of who they thought exemplified the Athlete of the Year honor. They will then vote for their top 3 male and female athletes and then I will tabulate the results and determine the winner. The winner will be announced in the coming days.

Below are the nominees for the Female Athlete of the Year award in alphabetical order by last name. Congrats to all those who were nominated and best of luck!



## **Emma Lohse – Senior – Basketball and Track and Field**

Louisburg senior Emma Lohse was a big varsity contributor for the Lady Cat basketball team and blazed the track for the Louisburg girls as the team's top sprinter.

On the track, Lohse recorded three state medals, including a pair of individual medals. She was the state runner-up in the 100-meter dash and later finished seventh in the 200 dash. Lohse was also a part of the 4×100-meter relay that medaled third and broke the school record in four straight meets. She also qualified for state in the 4×400-meter relay.

On the basketball court, Lohse was one of the Lady Cats' top defenders as she played a big role on a team that reached the sub-state championship game.



## **Emma Prettyman – Senior – Volleyball, Basketball, Track and Field**

Louisburg senior Emma Prettyman was a starter, or key contributor on three different Wildcat teams this past school year, including the volleyball, basketball and track and field programs.

On the volleyball court, Prettyman was one of the Lady Cats' middle hitters as she helped Louisburg to a fourth place finish at the state tournament. She finished with a team-high 60 blocks and had 166 kills.

Prettyman was the starting center for Louisburg basketball as the Lady Cats earned a spot in the sub-state championship game. She was among the team leaders in rebounds with 6.5 a contest and had two assists a game. She was named to the All-Frontier League Defensive Team.

Prettyan was also the top thrower on the Lady Cat track and field team and earned a spot at the state meet in the discus. It was there where she earned her first state medal as she took sixth overall.



## **Adyson Ross – Senior – Volleyball, Basketball and Soccer**

Louisburg senior Adyson Ross started for three different Wildcat programs this past season and it all started last fall in volleyball.

Ross, who started the season as an outside hitter, made the move to libero halfway through the year and thrived in her new role. She recorded 363 digs on the season to go along with 67 kills and 41 aces. She helped the Lady Cats to a fourth-place

finish at the state tournament and earned second-team all-league honors.

On the basketball court, Ross was a starting wing for the Lady Cats as she helped them advance to the sub-state championship game. She was the team's leading scorer at 12.5 points per game and averaged nearly seven rebounds a contest, to go along with two assists and 1.6 steals. Ross was selected first team all-league and earned a spot in the Missouri vs. Kansas all-star game. She also earned second team all-state honors.

On the pitch, Ross was one of the top goal scorers on a Wildcat team that reached the regional championship match. She finished the season with 16 goals and 21 assists to go along with 35 shots on goal. Ross later earned first team All-Frontier League honors and was also named second team all-state.



## Rowan Yows – Sophomore – Soccer

Lady Cat sophomore Rowan Yows was a key part of the Louisburg girls soccer team this past season that saw the Lady Cats reach the sub-state championship game.

Yows, who played in the midfield, was the team's leading scorer with 19 goals on the season and led the team with 50 shots on goal. She also tallied 11 assists on the season.

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## Pfannenstiel named new LHS AD; resigns boys basketball post



*Louisburg boys basketball coach Ty Pfannenstiel will take over the school's activities director role next school year. He also resigned his basketball position after coaching the Wildcats for the last six years.*

Beginning next school year, Louisburg High School activities will have a little different look to it – especially at the top.

Ty Pfannenstiel will serve as the school's new activities director and will take over for current AD, Michael Pickman, who will focus on his assistant principal duties and

curriculum.

Pfannenstiel, who has been the boys basketball coach for the last six years, resigned his post to take on the activities director position. He also stepped down as an assistant football coach.

Currently the weight room instructor, Pfannenstiel will spend half his day teaching and the other half in the AD role.

All of the moves were approved during Monday's meeting of the USD 416 Board of Education.

"This is very exciting for me," Pfannenstiel said. "It's definitely going to be a change. I have been a teacher and a coach for 18 years. I still get to be a teacher half-time, and now I get to step into a new role as an administrator. It is going to be all sports and activities and I am looking forward to the new direction."

As for Pickman, he gets the opportunity to focus more on the academic side as a full-time assistant principal. He was hired as an assistant principal/ activities director in April of 2020.

"I am very excited to commit more fully to the assistant principal role as education and curriculum have always been my true passion," Pickman said. "Being able to support the teachers, students, and administrative staff by providing data, feedback, and assessing teaching and learning goals and initiatives in the building and district aligns with that passion and the opportunity arose to allow for that. I hope to enable and promote continued growth in the various curriculums and initiatives and structures that make Louisburg a fantastic district in a supportive community.

"Ty has experience and is passionate about athletics and activities. As it is where his passion is, I have every confidence he will do a fantastic job in his new role and look

forward to witnessing where he takes our programs moving forward.”

Pickman took over LHS activities at a difficult time as the school was coming back from COVID-19 and the all challenges it presented. As tough as that situation was, he appreciated the relationships he built.

“I have thoroughly enjoyed my role as activities director and was presented a fantastic growth opportunity and am grateful for being given it,” Pickman said. “I had a goal of being present for athletes and coaches and for the patrons, so I hope people saw that presence. I was blessed to have great leadership in place in our coaches and sponsors, and tried to support them best by advocating for their needs and supporting them to do their job of being great role models and passing on their passion and knowledge to students.

“Ultimately, I am most proud of our student athletes and activity participants and being part of their journey. I believe that sports are an extension of the classroom and I wanted to help ensure that character and sportsmanship were just as important and success, and I am overjoyed to have a wealth of memories where our fans, students, participants, and coaches and sponsors proved that to be true of LHS.”

While taking on the challenge of being a new administrator is one he is looking forward to, leaving his coaching roots behind was a difficult decision for Pfannenstiel.

In 2021, Pfannenstiel led the Wildcat boys basketball team to the Class 4A state championship game and finished as the state runner-up.

“That was definitely the biggest thing that was holding me back,” Pfannenstiel said. “I love basketball and the kids that I have worked with. There is a group coming up that I really enjoy coaching, and leaving that behind was one of the biggest challenges for me. Whoever takes over the program, I think it



will be good transition for them because they will have a great group of kids to work with.

“Originally, I was going to be allowed to coach a sport and they didn’t want to take coaching away from me. The more I thought about it, if I want to do a good job at this, I need to focus on being the AD and that will be something that will benefit me and all the other activities.”

Pfannenstiel believes the move is a good one for the school in general as it will allow Pickman and principal Amy VanRheen to focus more on the academic side of things.

“This is something that is definitely needed,” Pfannenstiel said. “Our administrators are so busy with all the stuff they do during the school day, but they are also going to all the activities as well. Hopefully this will be a big help for Mrs. VanRheen and Mr. Pickman.”

Although he won’t official start his new position till next school year, Pfannenstiel is already starting to transition into his new role – one that is looking forward to.

“My job in the weight room and coaching has all been about sports,” he said. “That is what entices me about this job is that I am still going to be all about sports and activities. I just want to be a support for our coaches and our athletes and be advocate for our students.”

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**Dixon excited to join  
University of Florida**

# volleyball



***Louisburg alum Anna Dixon announced her decision to transfer to the University of Florida on Dec. 23 after spending the last three years at the University of Missouri.***

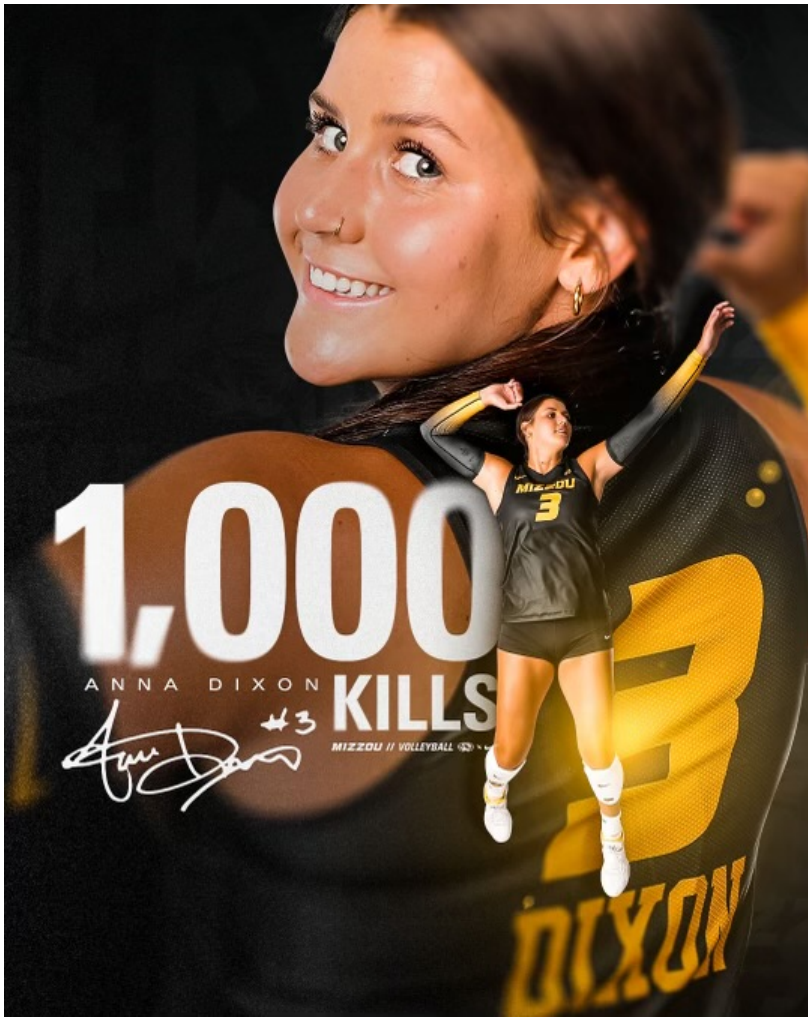
For the last three years, Anna Dixon loved her time competing at the University of Missouri and in the SEC.

With one more year of eligibility remaining, Dixon will still be playing in the SEC, but will wear a different uniform.

Last month, the Louisburg High alum made the decision to move on from Missouri and committed to the University of Florida program as a graduate transfer.

“For me, the most difficult decision was whether or not I should go far from home or not,” Dixon said. “Being so close to my family, it’s hard for me to get away, but I knew for my last year it’s time for me to get out and go somewhere I can push myself to grow the most. Being 17 hours from home and being in one of the most competitive environments, I knew Florida would be perfect for me since it’s going to push me to grow as a person and player.”

Dixon had a big senior season for Missouri as she appeared in all 28 matches for the Tigers and recorded double figure kills in 23 of those matches.

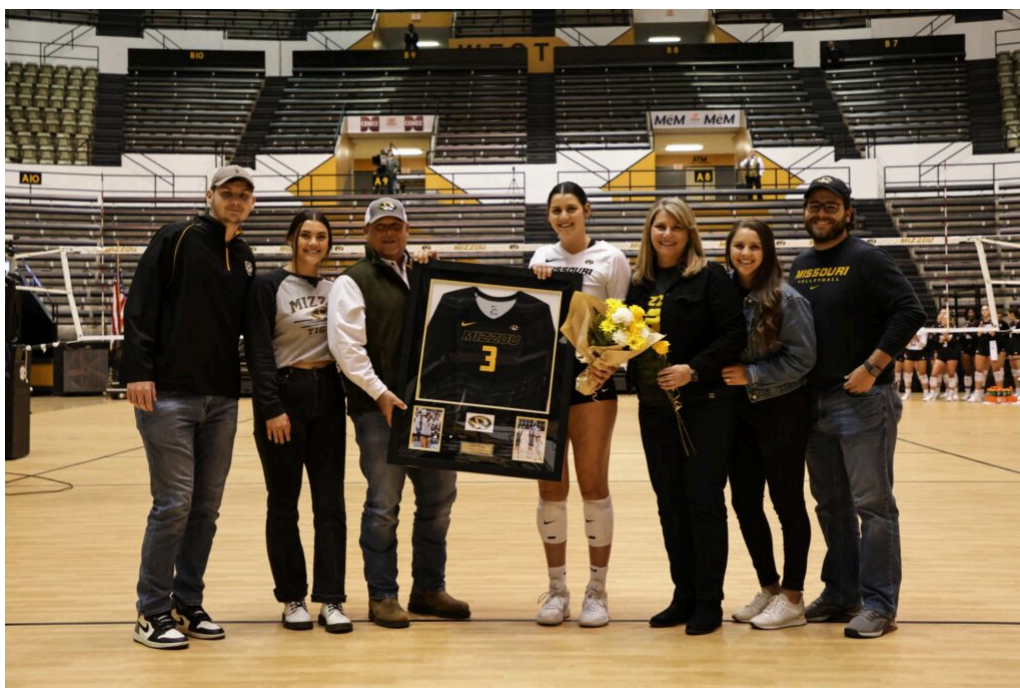


She finished the season second on the team with 353 kills, kills per set (3.30), points (381.5) and points per set (3.57). Dixon also hit a milestone this past season as she recorded her 1,000th career kill on Oct. 28 against Georgia.

Despite all those accomplishments, Dixon knows there is another level she can take her game and believes the Gator program can do that under head coach Mary Wise.

“I cannot wait to stay competing in the SEC,” Dixon said. “Not only is it extremely competitive, but you get to travel to see amazing campuses. Playing against Florida the last three years, they’ve really been able to see my strengths and weaknesses across the net. They see me best training right side this upcoming year to use me as a blocking threat in season. I’m so excited for this transition and how much it’s going to develop me as a player.”

As excited as Dixon is for the next chapter in her life, she is more than appreciative of what Missouri gave her for three years. It was all recognized on Senior Night on Nov. 20 when Anna got to walk on to the Hynes Center floor with her family for the final time.



***Anna Dixon celebrated Senior Night on Nov. 23 with her family in her final home game with the University of Missouri. / Photo by: Jaydyn Isiminger***

“Missouri gave me so much over the last three years,” Dixon said. “I got to create some amazing memories with my friends and teammates and got to connect with many people within other sports. I was blessed with a really great community of friends in Columbia which made my decision to leave really difficult. I just knew my time there with volleyball was over, but I can’t wait to cheer them and the new head coach on from afar.”

As for what the future holds for Dixon after Florida, that remains to be seen. She is just ready to enjoy the ride that is left.

“For my last year, I’m really wanting to focus on remaining in the present moment and emptying the tank,” Dixon said. “I’d love the opportunity to go pro after my final year at Florida, but I’m just going to focus on taking things day by day and

doing what I need to do to change my game tremendously. After that, I'll see where life takes me, but I'm super excited for this opportunity to really compete my last year and train under coach Wise."

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## Top 10 Louisburg Sports Stories of 2022



It was a successful, and eventful, 2022 for Louisburg High School athletics and for those who are connected to the Wildcat program.

This past year created a lot of school history for LHS and a few programs brought back state hardware.

Below are the top stories from 2022, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the writeup is the link to the actual story from the event.

When putting the list together, I took a lot of things into account – whether it was team vs. individual, popularity of the sport, historical achievements and the interest it drew on the web site.

This year was a blast to cover and I am looking forward to seeing what 2023 will bring. Thank you to everyone for their support and can't wait for it all to begin again.



## 10. Louisburg golf qualifies for state

FORT SCOTT – As the scores were rolling in, the Louisburg golf team was a little worried.

The Wildcats were in jeopardy of not qualifying for state after a few of the golfers didn't have the scores they were hoping for in the Class 4A regional tournament in Fort Scott.

Chanute and Independence had already assured themselves of a spot, but the third place team was up in the air as the top three teams automatically qualify for state.

As it turned out, the Wildcats had nothing to worry about as they edged Paola by four strokes to finish in third with a 357 to secure their third consecutive spot in the 4A state tournament.

Seniors A.J. Arriola, Sam Wheeler, Ian Kirkpatrick, Johnny Thompson, along with juniors Jackson Olson and Nick Lancaster, advanced to the state tournament.

Arriola carded a 78 and finished as a regional runner-up, as he was just two strokes behind regional champion Drayton Cleaver of Chanute.

As for Olson, the Louisburg junior set a personal record by six strokes to shoot an 81 and took fourth overall. Those personal bests were enough to get the Wildcats into that third place spot.

At state, Arriola and Wheeler finished as the team's top two golfers. Arriola carded a 97 to take 59th overall, while Wheeler finished with a 98 and came in 66th.



## **9. Brueggen's earns school's first state swim medal**

LENEXA – Even though she is just a freshman, Sabra Brueggen is already putting a stamp on her high school swim career at Louisburg High School.

It all came to a rousing end on May 21 as Brueggen earned her first state medal at the Class 5-1A Kansas State Swim and

Diving Championships at the Shawnee Mission School District Aquatic Center.

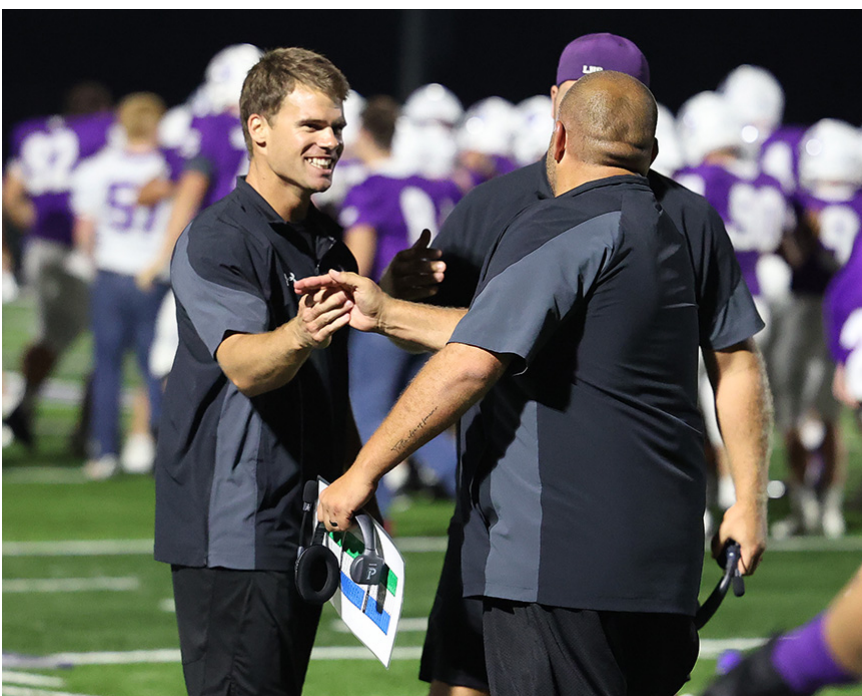
Brueggen became the first swimmer in school history to earn a state medal as she finished fifth in the 100-yard backstroke in 1:00.58.

On the day before in the preliminaries, Brueggen also took fifth in a season-best time of 1:00.15.

“Medaling as freshman means the world to me, and it proves to me that all of my hard work for all of these years, has paid off,” Brueggen said. “I feel like I performed my absolute best at state, and I was very happy with the results. It gives me confidence that I will have a bright future representing OzPaLou at the state swim meets.”

She nearly had a second medal in the 50 freestyle. Brueggen put together a season-best time of 25.26 seconds, but finished ninth overall. It was the same finish she had the in the preliminaries.

The top eight in each event earn a state medal as she was just .06 away from earning another spot on the medal stand.





## 8. Harding takes over as Wildcat football coach

The Louisburg football program had a different leader on the sidelines this past season.

The USD 416 Board of Education approved the hire of LHS assistant coach Drew Harding to be the team's new head coach in January after the district decided not to renew the contract of former coach Robert Ebenstein.

Harding spent the last five seasons as a Wildcat assistant coach, including time as a defensive coordinator. He is a 2010 Louisburg graduate and was a big part of the Wildcat program during his time as a student-athlete at Louisburg High School.

However, Harding didn't see himself be a head coach of any sport coming out of college.

"It means a lot," Harding said. "When I got out of school, I didn't get into education right away and started somewhere else. I decided to get into education because of the impact my former coaches at Louisburg had on me. To come full circle and to be in the position that I am in now, is pretty surreal. I am really excited for the opportunity and hopefully I can have the same type of impact on student athletes as they come through the program."

Ebenstein has the been the head coach the last five seasons and helped the Wildcats to a 30-18 record during that time, including a Frontier League and regional title in 2018. He had a winning record three of those five seasons.

He was also named the KFCA Coach of the Year during that season and was selected to be an assistant coach for the Kansas Shrine Bowl. He was an assistant coach for the Wildcat program for five years before earning the head coaching job.



## **7. Conley resigns a Louisburg head boys and girls soccer coach**

Louisburg High School head boys and girls soccer coach Kyle Conley stepped down from his position after seven years.

He was recently hired to lead the boys and girls soccer programs at Blue Valley West, where he will serve as the head coach of both teams.

Conley, who also taught social studies at LHS, informed the players and parents of his decision on May 4. The Blue Valley Board of Education approved his hire on May 9.

“Making the decision to leave Louisburg was extremely difficult,” Conley said. “The players and parents, both past and present, made this decision tough. No parents or players caused this decision. I am very thankful to Mr. (Dave) Tappan and Mr. (Darin) Gagnebin for giving me this opportunity to coach and teach at Louisburg. The amount of support that my

teams, my family and I received from Louisburg soccer parents and the community was incredible.”

Bobby Bovaird was hired as the new boys head coach, while Ben York returned to the program as the new assistant. York was also named the girls head coach after serving 13 years as the boys head coach previous to Conley.

Conley has the been head girls coach at Louisburg since its inception in 2016 and has led that program to four consecutive state final fours.

Twice, the Wildcats made the state championship game and finished runner-up on both occasions. He has guided the program to an 82-34-3 record.

Conley took over the boys program in 2016 and finished with a 77-32-3 record. He led the Wildcats to two state final fours during that span, including a third place finish in 2020.

“I am so proud of the things that our student athletes in the soccer programs have accomplished both on and off the soccer field,” Conley said. “I will always cherish the memories that we have made here with the Louisburg soccer programs.”



## **6. Girls cross country qualifies for state, Vohs earns state medal**

WAMEGO – For the second consecutive season, Emma Vohs left the Class 4A state cross country meet with more than she arrived with.

Vohs earned her second state medal at Wamego Country Club as she finished 10th overall with a time of 20 minutes and 51 seconds. The Louisburg junior did what she set out to accomplish.

“I was so excited to win another state medal this season and couldn’t be happier that I reached my goal for that race, which was placing top 10,” Vohs said. “The race was a tougher course, as was the competition this year, but I am blessed to run with such talented girls that push me to do better each race.”

Vohs led the Lady Cat team that qualified for state for the sixth consecutive season. As a team, Louisburg finished eighth overall with 208 points.

A week earlier at regionals, the team of Vohs, Maddy Rhamy, Lola Edwards, Nova Ptacek, Bree Gassman, Erin Apple and Madison Huggins finished third to punch their ticket to state

“It never gets old seeing the joy in the team’s eyes when they hear they qualified for state,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “The girls work hard to accomplish this goal each year, and because of their dedication to their sport, they achieve great things even if they might not make it, but they did.

“The program has built itself and I’m just glad to be a part of it. Yes, we put together a training plan to accomplish great things at the end of the season, but the runners do the work to get there. It takes self discipline, motivation and

guts to be there at the end of the season.”



## 5. Wildcat wrestling medals 3 at state

Louisburg wrestling has had its fair share of state medalists in its long history, but what the Wildcats accomplished in February at the Tony’s Pizza Events Center in Salina was something the program had never seen before.

The Wildcats left the Class 4A state tournament with three state medalists, the most for one year in program history.

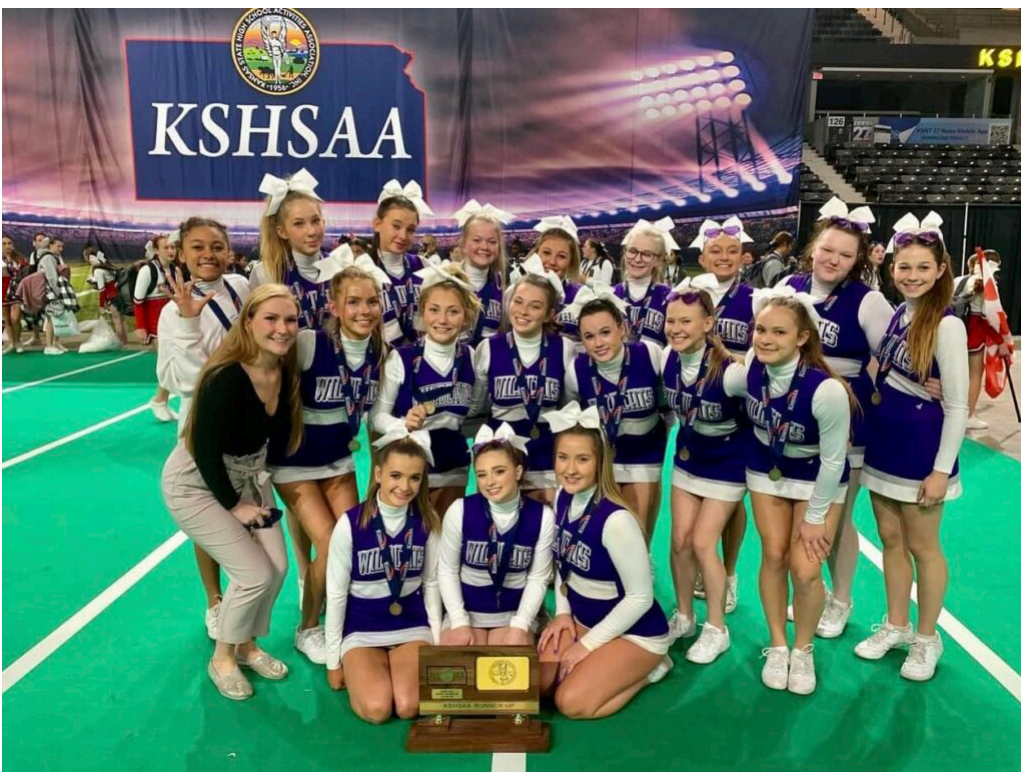
Aiden Barker (195 pounds), Kaven Bartlett (126) and Elijah Eslinger (285) each finished in the top six in their respective weight classes and put together their best performances of the season. It was also the first time each of them earned a state medal.

“This season was the most state placers we’ve had in a single year in program history,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Prior to 1992, KSHSAA only medaled the top 4 in each weight. In both 1988 and 1989, we had two top-4 placers and one top-6 placer, but this really shows how the program is progressing

and developing. We nearly had four medalists, too.”

Barker, a senior, was a favorite for a medal heading into Salina and finished fifth overall with a 13-1 major decision over Ottawa’s Jared Ferguson in the fifth-place match.

Bartlett and Eslinger also left lasting impressions on the Wildcat program as each medaled sixth overall after both nearly turned their brackets upside down as they advanced to the semifinals on Friday. They both guaranteed themselves a medal on the first day.



## 4. Louisburg cheer earns state runner-up performance

TOPEKA – It has almost become commonplace to see the Louisburg High School cheer squad in the finals of the Class 4A Gameday Spirit Showcase.

However, that doesn’t mean the cheerleaders are any less excited about it.

For the second straight season, the Wildcats finished as the state runner-up in the Class 4A competition at the Stormont-Vail Events Center. They finished with a score of 79.45 and were one point behind champion Paola.

It is the fourth straight season that the Wildcats have finished in the top three, which included a state championship in 2019.

“I am so unbelievably and incredibly proud of this team,” Louisburg coach Marissa Morrow said. “This positivity and attitude that these girls have shown this year have been the key to our success. I had no doubt that the material and performances we brought on Saturday had the potential to do well, but it was the girls who made it possible to pull it together. They were all such competitors and left it all out on the mat, and I couldn’t ask for more. We also could not have done it without the support of our amazing cheer families.”

Members of the team are Sydney Dudzik, Bella Feikert, Zoe Cutshaw, Caroline Dugger, Elizabeth George, Addison Drake, Brooklyn Harmon, Adison Vargo, Maddy Carpenter-Ross, Sienna Finch, Alayna Stohs, Alaina Dudzik, Maddie O’Keefe, Liz Willming, Kayleigh Ramsey, Taryn Osborn, Anna Brizendine and Jocelyn Burk.



### **3. LHS football secures Frontier League title**

With just over a minute left in regulation, Louisburg was staring at the possibility of their first league loss and was watching an outright Frontier League title slip away.

Spring Hill scored a touchdown and took a four-point lead with 1 minute and 12 seconds left. Things were looking bleak for the Wildcats.

As it turned out, 52 seconds was all the Wildcats needed to pull off one of the season's most memorable moments. Louisburg quarterback Declan Battle found junior Caden Caplinger in the endzone on an 18-yard touchdown pass with 20 seconds remaining to give the Wildcats a 20-17 victory.

The win was the Wildcats' seventh straight on the season and clinched the team's first Frontier League championship since 2018.



“There weren’t a lot of people who thought we could be league champions,” Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. “I don’t think it was anything that people expected out of us, and the Frontier League is really good. For this group to come to work, get better every day and to see success is pretty sweet.”

The win was extra special for 16 Louisburg seniors as they were also able to celebrate that league title on Senior Night.

Jackson Kush, Nathan Apple, Carson Wade, Isaiah Whitley, Riley Van Eaton, J.R. Rooney, Will Hutsell, Brayton Brueggen, Christian Golladay, Nathan Vincent, Jase Hovey, Mack Newell, Hunter Moore, Mason Dobbins, Corbin Hamman and Layne Ryals all got to end their final regular season home game with a win.

“The Frontier League title means so much to me and this team,” Rooney said. “As a team before the season, the seniors wrote down our goals, and league champs was on everyone’s list. To clinch it on senior night was amazing. Going undefeated at home, to win it on our field in front of our town – it was an indescribable feeling.”



## **2. Wildcat volleyball finishes fourth at state**

HUTCHINSON – The state tournament ended the way it started for the Louisburg volleyball team – with a loss to Towanda-Circle.

Still, it was everything that happened in between that made for a lot of lasting memories for the Wildcat players.

Louisburg went 2-1 in pool play at the Hutchinson Sports Arena, which included a revenge win over Tonganoxie in the final match of the day. That gave the Lady Cats a spot in the state semifinals Saturday, where they finished fourth in Class 4A.

The Wildcats suffered a 2-0 loss to both Bishop Miege and Circle, but they still ended their season as one of the state's top teams.

“I am extremely proud of this team,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “Looking at how we started this season, and our ups and downs along the way, it is a huge accomplishment for them to have come together as a team at the end of the season and play our best volleyball yet. It was apparent in the last couple of weeks that they really started playing for each other and capitalizing on the strong team bonds they built throughout the year.”

It was all thanks to an upset the previous week. Louisburg defeated the state's No. 1 seed, Baldwin, in the sub-state championship match to earn the state berth.

The Wildcats, the No. 9 seed, knocked off No. 1 seed Baldwin, 25-18 and 25-19, at Baldwin High School in the finals of the Class 4A sub-state tournament. That win puts Louisburg in the state tournament for the first time since 2019.

Members of the team are Emma Prettyman, Adyson Ross, Claire

Brown, Allie Kennedy, Ashlyn Berck, Delaney Nelson, Izzy Moreland, Bronwynn Williams, Caileigh Kilgore, Megan Quinn, Hailey Sword and Madelyn Williams.



## **1. Wildcat boys take third at state track; Koontz, Caplinger win state titles; Lady Cats medal nine**

WICHITA – For the second consecutive season, the Louisburg boys track and field team brought home hardware from the Class 4A state meet.

After winning the state championship in 2021, the Wildcats once again found their way to the podium in Wichita as they finished third overall with 67 points.

Andale won the state championship with 101 points and Chanute was the state runner-up with 71.

Louisburg got points from a lot of different areas as the Wildcats medaled in 10 events and had 12 medalists overall, including all three of their relays.

Louisburg senior Tom Koontz won a pair of state titles in the hurdles, while sophomore Caden Caplinger captured the gold medal in the pole vault.



“I am not going to complain at all,” Koontz said. “I believe we came here with less people than we did last year and everyone did their best. Even though we didn’t get exactly what we wanted, third place is still a great achievement.”

What he couldn’t believe was he had just won his first state title in the 300 hurdles and Koontz did so by breaking a 14-year-old school record. Koontz ran a time of 38.98 seconds to break R.J. Saunders’ record of 39.16 set in 2008 to earn the gold.

It turned out to be his second state title of the day as he also earned the gold medal in the 110-meter high hurdles with a time of 14.61 seconds. Koontz won the state in that event last season as well.

Caplinger cleared a lot of his marks in the pole vault and did so in convincing fashion as he was able to win a state title in just his second year with the program.



Last season at state, Caplinger medaled eighth after he cleared 12-6. A year later, the Louisburg sophomore improved his mark by two feet and is a state champion.

It was an impressive showing from Caplinger as he didn't miss an attempt until he tried for 15 feet at the end. He entered the competition at 12-6 and had five straight successful clearances.

"At first I was really nervous, but then it just kind of turned into a routine thing," Caplinger said. "I started going over heights consistently and the rest just kind of fell into place. I cleared 14-6 earlier this week twice in a row, so I knew I could do it. I was still a little nervous though."

As for the Lady Cats, Delaney Wright left the state meet with three medals. Wright, who has been coming back from a severe injury for most of the season, finished as the state runner-up

in the 400-meter dash, third place in the 200 dash and fifth in the long jump.

A season ago, Wright was the state champion in all three events, but couldn't get the repeat she was hoping for.



“Going into state I knew I still wasn't where I want to be due to my injury a couple months ago,” Wright said. “But I wanted to attack it still and give it all I had. I am blessed I was there to compete and earn three medals cause in the beginning I didn't even know if I was going to compete my senior year.”

In all, the Lady Cats put together a strong state performance as they medaled in nine events and finished with 40 team points and took sixth overall. They were just eight points away from the third place spot, and a plaque.

“Once again the state qualifiers did an amazing job,” Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. “They all performed well and most beyond expectations. To leave the meet finishing in sixth place was outstanding. We left with lots of medals and great memories.”

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# Kennedy named to KVA all-state volleyball team



*Louisburg senior Allie Kennedy was named to the KVA Class 4A All-State second team earlier this week after she led the Wildcats to a state tournament appearance.*

Allie Kennedy had a strong finish to her volleyball career as she helped Louisburg to a state tournament appearance and has been recognized for her efforts.

Honors to continue to roll in for the Louisburg senior and the most recent was a big one. Kennedy was named to the Class 4A all-state second team by the Kansas Volleyball Association.

Kennedy helped the Wildcats to a fourth place finish at state this past season and it was the program's first appearance since 2019.

Along with the all-state honor, Kennedy was also named to the KVA Class 4A All-State Tournament Team and was a second team All-Frontier League selection.

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**Spring Hill**  
913-592-2050

**Osawatomie**  
913-755-1909

**Harrisonville**  
816-730-2304

**Shawnee**  
913-962-8297

**Overland Park**  
913-962-8297



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At her middle blocker spot, Kennedy led the team with 305 kills. She also had a team-high 59 blocks to go along with 25 aces.

State champion Bishop Miege earned five spots on the team, while its coach, Lindsey Zych Franco was named the Coach of

the Year. Andale's McKenzie Fairchild was named the Player of the Year.

Five other Frontier League players also earned honors. Ottawa junior Emery Keebaugh was named to the first team.

Baldwin junior Fisayo Afonja and senior Chaney Barth were second team selections along with Kennedy. Paola senior Maggie Kauk and Tonganoxie junior Lucy Rieke were named honorable mention.

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## Wildcats earn three spots on all-league volleyball team



***Louisburg seniors Allie Kennedy and Adyson Ross were recently named to the All-Frontier League second team, while senior Claire Brown was an honorable mention.***

After a strong finish to its season, postseason awards are starting to trickle in for the Louisburg volleyball program.

Louisburg, which finished fourth at the Class 4A state tournament, saw a few of its players get recognized by the Frontier League coaches as the all-league team was released last week.

The Wildcats earned three spots on the team, which includes



and for the whole program,” Willer said. “We knew she was a strong hitter, but she really established herself as a powerful presence on the court for our team, and she stepped up to make big plays when we needed her to. She even made some fantastic defensive plays while she was back there serving.

“Allie was a great teammate, especially encouraging to Megan (Quinn) as they developed that setter/hitter connection, and her passion and desire for this team to succeed carried us through the last month of the season. Her energy was felt by everyone in the gym, and I am so glad that she was able to play the whole season, fighting until the very end.”



Ross changed positions halfway through the season for Louisburg. She moved from an outside hitter to libero for the Wildcats, which was a drastic change in responsibilities.

The Louisburg senior thrived in her new defensive role as she led the team with 363 digs and had 41 aces.

“Adyson is one of those kids you always want on your team, no matter the sport,” Willer said. “She was a great captain for us throughout the season, and her selflessness was apparent as we moved her all over the court when trying to find the right team lineup and dynamic.

“We knew we wanted her on the court all the time, and we ended up needing her in the libero role as her serve receive and

defense stabilized our entire team. Her consistency was pretty remarkable and she truly embraced her role. I am so glad the other coaches in the league were also able to see what a difference maker she was for us in that position.”



Brown played all six rotations for the Wildcats and was a force at the net. She was second on the team with 283 kills and also had 39 aces.

She was also one of the team’s strongest players defensively as she was second on the team with 358 digs.

“Claire had a standout junior season last year, and had some big goals coming into 2022,” Willer said. “She was great for us on the outside, but Claire really shines as a fantastic six-rotation player. She made an impact on every play with her serve receive and defense in addition to her swings.

“We don’t have a distinction for hitters on whether they play all six rotations or not, but I think Claire is one of the best all-around players in our league.”

The postseason awards didn’t stop there for Brown. She was also recognized by the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) as an all-region selection.

Brown was one of 11 Kansas girls selected to the team in a region that consists of players from Colorado, New Mexico,



Utah and Wyoming.

The Wildcats also thrived in the academic arena as well. Ross and senior Emma Prettyman were named to the AVCA Best and Brightest first team, while Brown was a third team selection.

The AVCA Best & Brightest Award is an award meant to honor individual high school Senior student-athletes who excel on and off the court. To be eligible for the Best and Brightest Award, Senior student-athletes must have earned at least a 3.5 Unweighted/4.0 Weighted GPA (or the equivalent, if using a different GPA scale) during their junior year and play in 50 percent of their varsity team's sets during their senior season.

## **ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE VOLLEYBALL**

### **First Team**

Shannon Frakes, Spring Hill, junior

Chaney Barth, Baldwin, senior

Fisayo Afonja, Baldwin, junior

Emery Keebaugh, Ottawa, junior

Maggie Kauk, Paola, senior

Libero: Taryn Marcum, Paola, junior

Setter: Daphne Gardner, Spring Hill, senior

### **Second Team**

Mariyah Noel, Bonner Springs, senior

Josie Pickett, Eudora, senior

Allie Kennedy, Louisburg, senior

Keliah Rivers, Spring Hill, junior

Lucy Rieke, Tonganoxie, junior

Libero: Adyson Ross, Louisburg, senior

Setter: Avery Bergan, Baldwin, junior

### **Honorable Mention**

Alyssa Reichard, Baldwin, junior

Claire Brown, Louisburg, senior

Addie Hedrick, Spring Hill, senior

Aleah Gollier, Ottawa, senior

Sawyer Schreiner, Eudora, senior

Anna Kane, Paola, junior

Jenna Weber, Spring Hill, senior

Bailey Poje, Tonganoxie, junior

Finley Rieke, Tonganoxie, freshman

Libero: Claire Baker, Baldwin, sophomore; Parker Long, Eudora, junior; Kylie Vandervoot, Tonganoxie, senior

Setter: Maddie Pitzer, Paola, senior; Ellie Suber, Eudora, junior; Kasia Baldock, Tonganoxie, junior

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# **Wildcats rally together to**

# finish fourth at state tournament



*Members of the Louisburg volleyball team celebrate a big point Friday during pool play of the Class 4A state tournament in Hutchinson.*

HUTCHINSON – The state tournament ended the way it started for the Louisburg volleyball team – with a loss to Towanda-Circle.

Still, it was everything that happened in between that made for a lot of lasting memories for the Wildcat players.

Louisburg went 2-1 in pool play Friday at the Hutchinson Sports Arena, which included a revenge win over Tonganoxie in the final match of the day. That gave the Lady Cats a spot in the state semifinals Saturday, where they finished fourth in Class 4A.

The Wildcats suffered a 2-0 loss to both Bishop Miege and Circle, but they still ended their season as one of the state's top teams.

“I am extremely proud of this team,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “Looking at how we started this season, and our ups and downs along the way, it is a huge accomplishment for them to have come together as a team at the end of the season and play our best volleyball yet. It was apparent in the last couple of weeks that they really started playing for each other and capitalizing on the strong team bonds they built throughout the year.”



***Louisburg senior Allie Kennedy goes up for a kill against Circle on Saturday in the third place match.***

It was the 19th state appearance for the Wildcat program and the 15th time Louisburg has reached the final four. Louisburg's last state appearance was in 2019, when the Wildcats also finished fourth.

Circle was the Wildcats' first opponent in pool play Friday, and while they put up a fight, came up short in a 25-17 and 25-18 setback to the team that was ranked No. 3 in the state coming into the tournament.

The loss meant the Wildcats, more than likely, needed to win the final two matches to have a chance at the state semifinals. The team rallied in its next match as it defeated Clay Center, 25-17 and 25-18.

That win set up a showdown with Tonganoxie, a team that Louisburg had lost to twice already this season. It was a win or go home scenario for both teams and the match – especially the first set – played out that way.

Louisburg outlasted Tonganoxie for a 32-30 win in the first set, and then used that momentum to take the match with a 25-18 victory in the second.



***Louisburg's Madelyn Williams celebrates a point Saturday during the state semifinals.***

"That first set was definitely a marathon, and it felt amazing to come out on top," Willer said. "I think whoever was going to win that set would have the momentum for the rest of the match, so I'm very glad we were able to finish it at 32. We went through six rotations of set points and defended theirs, but it was amazing to get that first set win.

"Our message to the team in between sets however was that that was only the first one. We have to go get another one right now and keep our momentum going. We didn't want that epic fight to be for nothing in the next set, so we were focused on starting off strong in set two."

Louisburg trailed 21-19 in the first set, but rallied to tie it on a kill and block from junior Madelyn Williams. The Wildcats then took a 23-21 lead on back-to-back kills from

junior Hailey Sword.

Tonganoxie rallied to tie it, but the Wildcats played strong defense to take a 24-23 advantage thanks to a diving save from senior Adyson Ross off a Tonganoxie block, that in turn allowed junior Megan Quinn to get it out of the net and senior Claire Brown to knock it over. The Chieftains then sent the ball out of bounds to give Louisburg the point.

The Chieftains had set point on four different occasions, but the Wildcat defense was strong and kept the match alive. With the match tied at 30-all, senior Allie Kennedy tipped the ball over the net to give Louisburg the lead, and then Tonganoxie hit the ball out of bounds to give Louisburg the win.



***Louisburg junior Hailey Sword goes up for a kill Friday during pool play.***

“The Tonganoxie match really displayed how far this team has come in terms of chemistry and teamwork,” Willer said. “I love how hard the girls fought for each other and how every single person, on the bench or on the court, was invested in the success of the team every step of the way.”

On Saturday, the Wildcats squared off with Bishop Miege – the eventual state champion. Louisburg lost 25-14 and 25-21 to the Stags, which set up a rematch with Circle for third place.

After dropping the first set 25-12, Louisburg had a three point lead late in the match, but eventually fell 26-24 to finish fourth.

“I thought we came out nervous, evident by the first set score,” Willer said. “That being said, I think we fought back well and played tough against a really good Miege team. I think it was harder for us to bounce back from the Miege loss than we anticipated, but we played better in the second set against Circle as well. Unfortunately, we just weren’t able to close out the second set and push it to three.”



***Louisburg senior Adyson Ross dives to the floor for a dig Friday in Hutchinson.***

Louisburg got production from all over the court throughout the tournament.

Kennedy led Louisburg at the net with a team-high 34 kills to go along with six blocks. Williams also had a big tournament with 29 kills and five blocks.

Brown had 24 kills from outside spot, while Sword finished with 18. Sword also had a team-high six aces in the five matches.

Senior Emma Prettyman had a team-high nine blocks to go along with 10 kills.

Junior setter Megan Quinn finished with 95 assists and celebrated a milestone of her own. Quinn eclipsed the 1,000 assist mark in the Lady Cats' win over Tonganoxie.



***Louisburg junior setter Megan Quinn eclipsed the 1,000 assist mark***

Ross led the Louisburg back row with 42 digs, while Brown finished with 38 and Quinn tallied 26. Williams was also big in the back with 34 digs.

As tough as the loss was, four Lady Cat seniors – Kennedy, Ross, Brown and Prettyman also played their final match for the program. Still, it was a good way to end it as Louisburg will try to build on this moving forward.





*Members of the Louisburg team are (front row, from left) Emma Prettyman, Adyson Ross, Allie Kennedy, Claire Brown; (back row) Bronwynn Williams, Madelyn Williams, Hailey Sword, Izzy Moreland, Megan Quinn, Delaney Nelson, Ashlyn Berck, Caileigh Kilgore and head coach Leanna Willer.*

“Our seniors finished their careers on an absolute high note, and next year’s returners were able to gain valuable experience of postseason play,” Willer said. “We have young girls who were able to get a taste of that feeling and we will be coming back hungry next season.”

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# **Wildcats ready for familiar foes as they try for first state title**



***Members of the Louisburg volleyball team mob each other after winning the sub-state title last Saturday at Baldwin.***

It has been a revenge tour of sorts for the Louisburg volleyball team and it all started Saturday against Baldwin.

The Wildcat upset the No. 1-seeded Bulldogs to advance to their first state tournament since 2019. It was also payback from a loss in the sub-state championship game a year ago, and again earlier during the season.

“It has been super exciting,” senior Emma Prettyman said. “I know we were technically the underdogs going in, but we really stepped it up and to beat Baldwin was just really exciting. I can’t wait to see what state brings.”

What the state tournament has given the Wildcats so far is an opportunity to right some wrongs that happened during the season.

Four teams – Tonganoxie (twice), Bishop Miege, Paola and Towanda-Circle – handed Louisburg a loss and are all in the state tournament. Two of them – Tonganoxie and Circle – are in the same pool as the Wildcats.

The Wildcats will get their first shot at revenge at 9:30 a.m. Friday when they open pool play against Circle and then will meet Tonganoxie at 12:30 p.m. Louisburg also has a match with Clay Center sandwiched in between. The top two teams in each pool advance to the semifinals

“I am excited about the rematch and glad this isn’t the first time we are seeing them (Circle),” Willer said. “Even though

we lost, we have gotten better since then and the girls see it as an opportunity to show them how much we have grown. We have seen Paola, Tonganoxie and Miego too, and while those didn't end in our favor the first time around, neither did Baldwin and look what we did."



***Louisburg senior Emma Prettyman goes up for a kill during last weekend's sub-state tournament in Baldwin.***

Louisburg lost to Circle in three sets in the championship game of the Circle tournament earlier this month. Circle is considered a top-3 team in the state and gives the Wildcats a tough opening match.

Still, the Wildcats aren't deterred by what happened earlier in the year – they are using it as motivation.

"They were the last game of the tournament and everyone was pretty tired by that point," senior Claire Brown said. "I don't think we played them as well as we could have. I think our showing will be a lot different than last time we played them. They are a very good team, but we have a good shot at winning down there.

“We all have high expectations for ourselves. I think everyone is going to bring the best version of themselves for each game.”

It has been an up and down season for Louisburg that ended with an 18-17 record going into sub-state action. It is one that featured different lineups and Willer was doing what she could to get the pieces to fit.

Then she decided to have a chat with Adyson Ross. The Louisburg senior had mainly been known as a hitter, but Willer wanted to try her out at the libero spot.

It was a change that took some getting used to.

“Adyson is the type of kid who will do whatever you ask of her,” Willer said. “She knows the only reason we are asking is because it is what is best for the team. She tried it out a little bit over the summer, but she loves to hit. She is always asking in practice if she can hit and she just loves it. She loves blocking, but she also gets a lot of satisfaction being back there and getting a lot of digs.

“She’s become the voice behind the hitters and she has taken ownership in that. She realizes that the move made our defense so much better and she is just consistent back there. While she can hit and block, we needed her more in that position.”



***Louisburg head coach Leanna Willer and Adyson Ross share some tears following the sub-state championship.***

Ross has done it all for the Wildcats. As sophomore, she was an outside hitter, and as a junior, started on the outside and then moved to a defensive specialist spot, before having to play as a middle blocker due to injury.

Then after starting this season in the front row, made the move to the libero position, and the team started to head in the right direction. It began at the end of September at the Louisburg Invitational, when the Wildcats rattled off five wins in a row and took second.

There have been ups and down since then, but it has been a change for the better.

“Whatever the team needed I was okay with doing,” Ross said. “If the team needed a libero, I was ready to play that position. It is definitely different than swinging, by a lot. You don’t see many 5-9 girls in high school playing libero, but I just want to do whatever I can for the team. It doesn’t matter where I am out on the court, I just want to help out.”

Although the lineup was working better, Willer still noticed a lack of closeness between her team and focused on improving that as sub-state got closer.

Whatever they did, seemed to work as they came out as a team on a mission last Saturday.



***Louisburg senior Allie Kennedy shares a hug with senior teammate Claire Brown following the team's sub-state win.***

“You never realize that it is coming to an end until it gets close, then all of sudden you realize you are never going to get to do this again,” senior Allie Kennedy said. “I am not going to play in college, so I wasn't ready to for this to an end, and neither were the other girls. It made everyone step up and that it is a team thing.

“We figured that out and we did a lot of team bonding before sub-state. I think we are just all a lot closer now and that helps with trust and playing for each other.”

Willer knew before the season even started that it was going to take some time for this group to jell together.

“The thing I am most proud of them for is how much they have

grown over the season,” Willer said. “Even after taking them to camp over the summer and in summer league, you could tell it was a group that wasn’t really comfortable with one another. They weren’t already friends, which was really the case with the group the last couple of years, so they have put significant time and energy into working together and becoming a team. They have grown to love each other, and you can see that now, but from where we started to where we are now – they are completely a different team.”



***Louisburg junior Madelyn Williams wins a ball at the net last Saturday. Williams plays all six rotations for the Wildcats.***

A lot of players contribute for the Wildcats and it starts up front as Kennedy leads the team with 270 kills on the season and Brown is right behind her with 259. Prettyman and junior Hailey Sword each have 157, while junior Madelyn Williams has 141 kills from her all-around spot.

Louisburg junior Megan Quinn has had a good year as the team’s setter with 885 assists and is second on the team with 41 aces. Sword leads the way in that department with 46.

Brown, who also plays all six rotations, leads the team with 321 digs and Ross is right behind her with 319.

The Wildcats hope they can continue their good play from last weekend as they try for the program's first state championship.

"I am so ready for this," Ross said. "This is the kind of thing that every athlete dreams about at the start of the season. We are completely focused and we know that we are just not fighting to stay alive for another week – we want our name up on the wall. We want a state championship. That is exciting, but we are trying to stay as focused as possible."

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## **STATE BOUND: Louisburg upsets No. 1 seed Baldwin for sub-state title**



***Louisburg senior Adyson Ross hoists the sub-state championship trophy Saturday while teammates (from left) Allie Kennedy, Bronwynn Williams and Emma Prettyman were all smiles following the Wildcats' upset of No. 1 seed Baldwin.***

BALDWIN CITY – Hailey Sword passed it. Megan Quinn set it. Allie Kennedy put it away.



Louisburg won its biggest match point in almost four years and earned the title of Cinderella as the Wildcats pulled out maybe the most shocking upset in the state last Saturday.

The Wildcats, the No. 9 seed, knocked off No. 1 seed Baldwin, 25-18 and 25-19, at Baldwin High School in the finals of the Class 4A sub-state tournament. That win puts Louisburg in the state tournament for the first time since 2019.

Cheers erupted, the bench emptied and tears started to flow. The Wildcats accomplished something many people didn't think was possible – except for themselves.

“It is just so unreal,” senior Adyson Ross said. “There are no words. We all went into the game knowing that we could pull this off. We were all confident in each other and that was an unbelievable feeling to have. Then after it was all over – it is just unreal. It is the best feeling.”

That feeling was one of happiness and a little bit of shock in what was surreal moment for everyone on the floor. The Wildcats had finally put together that complete game and did it at the exact right time.

“To say that I am proud would just be an understatement,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “My heart was so completely full for these girls – I've never experienced anything like it. Watching them tackle each other to the ground with overwhelming excitement and love for their teammates gave me so much joy. They played with incredible grit, determination, and heart to earn that trophy. It was a pretty surreal moment, and I am just thankful to be along for the ride.”



***Members of the Louisburg volleyball team pile on each other at center court following their sub-state championship win over Baldwin.***

The Wildcats, who came into the tournament with a record that was just above the .500 mark, faced off with the No. 2 ranked team in the state in Baldwin. The Bulldogs had just four losses on the season and had beaten Louisburg, 3-1, earlier in the year.

Louisburg put together a completely different performance as the Wildcats made very few errors and made a statement early by winning the first set and putting all the pressure on the Bulldogs.

“It did a lot for our confidence,” senior Claire Brown said. “We wanted to come out firing and we did. It paid off in our favor and we put so much heart into every single ball. Everyone was playing for each other.”

That selflessness all over the floor made the Wildcats a dangerous team on Saturday as each player made an impact. Not only against Baldwin – but also in their 25-18, 17-25 and 25-15 victory over the Fort Scott in the semifinals when their backs were against the wall.

“It is tradition that we all talk before the game,” Kennedy said. “We all talked about how we were the underdogs and that we can really take it. I truly believe that everyone thought that we could do it and we just put it all out there because there was nothing to lose.”



***Louisburg senior Claire Brown puts away a kill Saturday against Baldwin.***

There was a little doubt about how the Wildcats would take the floor Saturday. Senior middle blocker Emma Prettyman twisted her ankle earlier in the week in practice and the team wasn't sure if she was going to play.

Prettyman came up big for her teammates against Baldwin with five kills and two blocks on a bad ankle.

“We did our best to give her as much time to rest as possible, but I am so glad that she toughed it out and was able to play in Saturday's matches,” Willer said. “Again, she wasn't going to let her senior season end from the bench, or at all. She wasn't at her strongest, but she made her presence known with a couple of huge blocks and key kills throughout the game.”



***Louisburg junior Hailey Sword goes up for a kill in the sub-state semifinals against Fort Scott.***

Kennedy knows all about having her season end with an injury. She saw her season come to a close in the middle of last year with a leg injury and also missed time her sophomore season.

The Louisburg senior made the most of her sub-state appearance. Kennedy led the Wildcats with 16 kills to go along with three blocks and three aces in the two sub-state matches.

“It is just crazy,” Kennedy said. “All my years of high school we have had these amazing teams but we have never gotten this far. So to do this with all my best friends, and it being my senior year, it is just amazing. I am so proud of everyone.

“Sub-state is a big deal for me, especially with this being my senior year, because I knew it could be my last game. I just worked as hard as I could and made sure no ball hit the floor on defense.”



***Louisburg senior Allie Kennedy records the final kill on match point against Baldwin.***

However, that last kill was the one that was that Kennedy and the rest of the Wildcats will remember for awhile.

“Allie had a fantastic game, and she’s been playing really well here at the end of the season,” Willer said. “Her voice and leadership on this team have played a huge role, and her game play has stepped up to match it. I don’t think Megan would have set any other player on game point, and that says a lot about what she means to our team.”

Quinn ran the offense well for Louisburg as she finished 51 assists and handed them out to several different hitters throughout the day.

Junior Madelyn Williams was second on the team with 14 kills to go along with a team-high four aces. Brown finished with 10 kills on the day and had three aces.



***Louisburg's (left) Madelyn Williams, Delaney Nelson and Claire Brown celebrate a big kill Saturday against Fort Scott.***

Junior Hailey Sword had six kills but also led the Wildcats with four blocks. Ross, the team's libero, had 12 digs and two aces.

Brown led the Wildcat defense with 19 digs in the two matches, while Williams finished with 17 and Sword added 12.

Along with the state berth, the Wildcats also exacted some revenge as Louisburg and Baldwin squared off last season in the sub-state championship in Baldwin. The Bulldogs ended the Wildcats' season that time, but Louisburg was able to turn the tables in 2022.



***Senior libero Adyson Ross returns a serve Saturday against Baldwin.***

“Our girls played so well against Baldwin – the best they have played all season,” Willer said. “We have talked about how the entire season leads up to this moment and it’s just about showing everyone what we’re made of. Previous record doesn’t really matter when you come to play like that. Heading into the Baldwin match, our girls were amped to say the least. They were focused on getting revenge for last year’s team and doing whatever it takes to continue their season.

“We have grown so much as a team all year long, and they decided to go out there and give it their all for the girls standing beside them along the way. Our theme of ‘We Over Me’ really clicked with this team as we prepared for our postseason run.”

After winning the first set in convincing fashion, the Bulldogs battled back in the second. Baldwin took an 11-8 lead, but a pair of Kennedy kills helped tie the match.

Tied at 14-all, Louisburg went on a 5-0 run to take a 19-14

advantage. Baldwin didn't go away as it rattled off four straight points to cut the Louisburg lead to one and Willer called a timeout.

Baldwin eventually tied the match at 19-all.

"I had everybody take a deep breath," Willer said. "We were getting frazzled, and needed to slow the game down in our minds. We talked about keeping our passes off the net to give Megan room to work, and for everyone to be available as a hitter to take pressure off of our only two front row hitters, Claire and Emma.

"Everyone on the bench at the time was positive and encouraging, and we knew we just needed to take back control and force Baldwin to play our game, versus the other way around. We told them to stay confident and trust themselves."



***Louisburg junior Megan Quinn sets at the net Saturday in Baldwin.***

The Wildcats found that confidence again as Sword had two big digs in the back row to force a Baldwin side out and regained



the lead at 20-19.

Ross went on to serve the next five points, including an ace. Brown added a kill and Kennedy came through with two kills, including the final one on match point.

“I think honestly, all of us knew that we could win this match,” Ross said. “Just coming together as a team, and having that belief in each other, knowing the your teammate is going to put that ball away and do their job – it is more powerful than anything else.”



***The Louisburg volleyball team celebrates match point in the sub-state championship against Baldwin.***

Louisburg will now take that team-first attitude into the Class 4A state tournament Friday in Hutchinson. The Wildcats are the No. 7 seed (20-17) will begin pool play against No. 2 Towanda-Circle (34-4) at 9:30 a.m. at Hutchinson Sports Arena.

The Wildcats will also have pool play matches against No. 3 Clay Center (27-10) at 10:30 a.m. and No. 6 Tonganoxie (24-14) at 12:30 p.m. The top two teams in each pool will advance to the state semifinals Saturday.

Still as much as they are looking forward to state, the Wildcats are also relishing this moment, including Willer who won her first sub-state title as a head coach. Last Saturday, also happened to be her birthday and her team couldn't have given her a better present.



***Members of the Louisburg volleyball team are (front row, from left) Emma Prettyman, Adyson Ross, Claire Brown, Allie Kennedy; (back row) assistant coach Kallie O'Keefe, assistant coach Rich Brown, Ashlyn Berck, Delaney Nelson, Izzy Moreland, Bronwynn Williams, Caileigh Kilgore, Megan Quinn, Hailey Sword, Madelyn Williams and head coach Leanna Willer.***

"It means the world to me because I know exactly how much time, effort, and energy that these girls have devoted to our team to get to this point," Willer said. "There were very few people who even considered state a possibility for this team. I heard it referenced as a 'rebuilding year' countless times and we were definitely the underdog heading into Saturday's matches. This team came in with something to prove and I am so proud of each and every one of them."

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# Week 7 Athlete of the Week: Allie Kennedy



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week seven of the fall sports season, sponsored by Dr. Laura's Orthodontics.

## **ALLIE KENNEDY, SENIOR, VOLLEYBALL**

Louisburg senior Allie Kennedy has been a force in the middle for the Louisburg volleyball team this season and Kennedy has led the Wildcats to a strong finish to their regular season. The Wildcats have won six of their last seven matches going into the postseason, and last Thursday against Olathe North and Wamego, Kennedy led Louisburg with 15 kills and four blocks.

On the season, Kennedy leads the team in kills with 254 from her middle blocker spot and has a hitting percentage of .302. She is tied for the team lead in blocks with 49. Kennedy also has 22 aces in 35 matches played.

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: Layne Ryals

Week 2: Nathan Vincent

Week 3: Emma Vohs

Week 4: Claire Brown

Week 5: Ashton Moore

Week 6: Colin McManigal

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