

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 second team honors for seniors Allie Kennedy and Adyson Ross, along with an honorable mention selection to senior Claire Brown.

In a league that had three teams reach the Class 4A state tournament, Louisburg coach Leanna Willer was pleased to see her players get recognized.

“I think our team was well-represented,” Willer said. “It was a weird year in the sense that we were seventh (out of 8 teams) in the league, yet we made it to the state tournament and ended up fourth in the state.

“Considering our whole year performance and our league games, having these three seniors selected as all-league was a great

way to honor them and their careers. Our league was as strong as always, so we are happy to have these three representing our school.”



Kennedy was a force in the middle for the Wildcats as she led the team with 305 kills from her middle blocker spot. She also had a team-high 59 blocks to go along with 25 aces.

She also thrived in the postseason as she was named to the Class 4A State All-Tournament Team by the Kansas Volleyball Association following the team’s fourth place state finish.

“Allie really stepped up this year as a leader on the court 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

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 Miego – 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 Miego team. I think it was harder for us to bounce back from the Miego 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.”

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 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 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."

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 Louisville and Baldwin squared off last season in the sub-state championship in Baldwin. The Bulldogs ended the Wildcats' season that time, but Louisville 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."

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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Wildcats end regular season with sweep of Wamego, Olathe North



Louisburg seniors Allie Kennedy (left) and Claire Brown go up for a block Thursday at Olathe North High School.

OLATHE – Going into its final two matches of the season, the Louisburg volleyball team wanted to head into the postseason on a positive note.

Mission accomplished.

Louisburg traveled to Olathe North on Thursday for a triangular with Wamego and the Wildcats left with a pair of wins. The Wildcats defeated Wamego 25-14 and 25-22 and then followed it up with a 25-17 and 25-23 victory over Olathe North.

The Wildcats have now won six out of their last seven matches on the season as they now prepare for the sub-state tournament in Baldwin on Saturday. They are currently 18-17 on the season.

“Finishing our regular season with those two wins was the perfect way to launch us into sub-state week,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “Last year we went 0-2 at that same triangular, so going 2-0 this year was great recognition for the hard work that these girls have put in this season.

“After those games, we were able to take the weekend off to rest, relax, catch up on sleep, and prepare our minds and bodies for postseason and the team was determined to go into fall break on a high note.”



Louisburg senior Adyson Ross chases down a ball Thursday against Olathe North.

Louisburg took control of the match against Wamego and played strong all over the court.

Senior Allie Kennedy led Louisburg with eight kills, two blocks and an ace, while junior Madelyn Williams and senior Claire Brown had seven and six kills, respectively.

Junior setter Megan Quinn finished with 24 assists in the match. Senior libero Adyson Ross led the team defensively with nine digs and also had a team-high two aces. Junior Ashlyn Berck and Williams also had an ace.

Against Olathe North, Ross was big from behind the service line for the Wildcats with a team-high three aces and also had nine digs.

Quinn finished with a team-best 18 assists to guide the Wildcat offense and also led the team in digs with 10.

At the net, Brown and Kennedy each paced the Wildcats with seven kills each and Williams added six in the win. Junior

Hailey Sword added six digs in the win.



Louisburg junior Madelyn Williams goes up for a kill Thursday against Wamego.

"We played a solid two matches of volleyball," Willer said. "I think the girls would agree that we definitely were not perfect or always at our best, but we remained confident and in control throughout the night. We saw quite a few positives. After being plagued with a stomach bug earlier in the week, it was nice to get all the girls back out on the court.

Freshman Delaney Nelson also made her varsity debut against Wamego and recorded her first kill.

"Delaney did a great job," Willer said. "The rest of the team was so excited for her to play – I think Claire yelled the loudest of the entire night when she got her first kill. It has been pretty awesome to see our upperclassmen love, support and encourage our freshmen throughout the season."

Now the Wildcats are focused on the postseason. Louisburg is the No. 9 seed and will play No. 8 Fort Scott at 3 p.m in the

Baldwin sub-state. Baldwin is the tournament's No. 1 seed.

All tournament games will be played at Baldwin Jr. High School on Saturday, with the championship match to be held at 4 p.m.

"We are so excited for the postseason," Willer said. "We talk about it all the time, so we are glad that this week is finally here – this is what we have been working for since the end of May. This team has so much potential and we are looking to play our best at this time in the season.

"Our attitudes are positive and we will bring competitive energy to practice throughout the week gearing up for Saturday. We've been competing with great teams all season long and we are ready to show everyone what Louisburg volleyball is all about."

Wildcats rack up four wins as they finish runner-up at Circle Invitational



The Louisburg volleyball team finished 4-1 on Saturday at the Circle Invitational and took second overall, falling to No. 3 ranked Circle in the championship match.

TOWANDA – In its final tournament action of the regular

season, the Louisburg volleyball team got a much-needed boost of momentum Saturday as the Wildcats inch closer to the postseason.

The Wildcats traveled to Towanda and took part in the Circle High School Invitational. Louisburg won four straight matches to advance to the championship match, before falling to Circle, 3-1, and finished runner-up.

"I think we had a great weekend overall and came out of the tournament feeling more bonded as a team and confident in ourselves and each other," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "Although we didn't always play our best, we remained consistent and held strong throughout the day, not dropping a set until the final championship match."

Louisburg faced off Circle, which is currently the No. 3 ranked team in Class 4A. The Wildcats (16-17) pushed the host team, but fell short in a 25-17, 20-25 and 25-19 loss. Louisburg trailed 13-5 in the deciding third set, but couldn't complete the comeback.

Senior middle blocker Allie Kennedy had a big outing for the Wildcats as she finished with a team-high 13 kills to go along with two blocks and an ace.

Outside hitter Claire Brown added nine kills in the loss and junior Hailey Sword finished with six. Brown and Sword also each had nine digs.

Senior libero Adyson Ross led the Louisburg defense with 10 digs, while juniors Megan Quinn and Madelyn Williams had eight. Quinn also ran the offense well with 33 assists.

"Circle is a strong team," Willer said. "They were ranked third in the state in 4A and for good reason – they are a well-coached and very solid team. We knew it would be our toughest match of the day going in, but we kept our heads and fought the whole way through."

“Unfortunately, we weren’t able to stop them on a long run in the third set that we couldn’t quite overcome. That being said, I am proud of how our girls battled.

Louisburg went 3-0 in pool play to start tournament action as the Wildcats defeated Kingman (25-18, 25-18), Winfield (25-18, 25-19) and Eureka (25-19, 25-21).

The Wildcats then advanced to the semifinals with a 25-11 and 25-15 victory over Wichita North.

Kennedy was big for the Wildcats throughout the tournament as she finished with a team-high 44 kills and was second on the team with nine aces. Kennedy also led Louisburg with seven blocks and had a .450 hitting percentage.

Williams was second on the team with 31 kills and a team-high 10 aces. She also finished with 24 digs.

Ross led the Wildcat defense with 41 digs, while Brown had 29 kills and 29 digs. Quinn handed out 128 assists throughout the tournament and also had 30 digs.

“Allie really stood out this weekend,” Willer said. “In addition to her offense, she led the team in blocks and was second in aces from behind the service line. I was also very impressed with our passers all-around. Adyson, Claire, Madie, and Hailey all contributed here and did a great job putting Megan in a position to run the offense.”

Louisburg will end the regular season today as the Wildcats travel to Olathe North for a triangular with Wamego. Matches begin at 6 p.m.

Wildcats get a pair of victories at Ottawa Invitational



Louisburg seniors Allie Kennedy (left) and Claire Brown team up for a block Thursday at home against Tonganoxie.

OTTAWA – It had been another busy week for the Louisburg volleyball team, and by the time the Ottawa Invitational was done Saturday, the Wildcats had played seven matches in a span of five days.

Although the Wildcats finished just 2-5 during that stretch, they took several positives away from tournament play Saturday.

Louisburg went 2-3 at the Ottawa Invitational, with two of those wins coming against Basehor-Linwood and Ottawa. The Wildcats also lost a close match to state-ranked Bishop Miege.

“We were hoping to end up with a better record on the day, but I felt that we played pretty well for the most part – even in a couple of the games that we lost,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “We are working on our consistency as a team, even when things may not be going our way. I was proud of the resilience and mental toughness we showed throughout the day to persevere through the challenges we faced.”

The Wildcats opened tournament action with a 25-18 and 25-23 loss to Maize South and then fell to Tonganoxie, 25-11 and

25-20.

Louisburg responded well as the Wildcats avenged a loss from earlier in the season as they defeated Ottawa, 22-25, 25-22 and 25-21. They got back-to-back victories as they downed Basehor-Linwood, 23-25, 25-19 and 25-22.

In their final match of the day, the Wildcats lost to Bishop Miege, 25-22 and 25-21.



Louisburg senior Emma Prettyman goes up for a kill Thursday against Tonganoxie.

"It was great to get a win under our belt right before the lunch break, especially against Ottawa," Willer said. "Looking back to our match against them earlier this season, we knew it would be a battle again but we really wanted to come out on top this time. We showed some grit in those final plays and we saw some kids step up to shut down the match.

"Although we lost to both Maize South and Bishop Miege, those games were close, intense, and included a lot of really great volleyball. We were neck and neck with both teams and found

ourselves contesting both teams every step of the way. The biggest positive for me to see as a coach in those games was that our confidence never wavered and we continued to play great team ball.”

The Wildcats (12-15) got good play at the net as five players earned double digit kill numbers. Senior Claire Brown led the way with 35 kills on the day and junior Madelyn Williams was second with 30.

Senior Emma Prettyman finished with 23, while senior Allie Kennedy and junior Hailey Sword had 21 and 20, respectively. Prettyman and Kennedy also led the Wildcats defense at the net with eight blocks each.

Junior setter Megan Quinn finished the tournament with 104 assists and was also second on the team with five aces.

Sword led the Wildcats from behind the service line with a team-high seven aces, while senior Adyson Ross and Kennedy each had four.

Defensively, Ross – the team’s libero – led the Wildcats in the back with 37 digs. Brown and Williams were right behind her with 36 each.

Louisburg is back in action tonight as the Wildcats travel to Eudora for a Frontier League match. Varsity is set to begin at 6:30 p.m.

Wildcats fall to Tonganoxie on Senior Night, Baldwin on road

Louisburg seniors Claire Brown, Adyson Ross, Allie Kennedy, Emma Prettyman and Ava Jorn walked onto their home court for the final time Thursday when the Wildcats hosted Tonganoxie on Senior Night.

Unfortunately, it didn't have the end they all were hoping for.

Tonganoxie handed Louisburg a 25-11, 25-16, 14-25 and 25-17 loss in what was their second straight defeat on the week. Last Tuesday, the Wildcats fell to No. 3 Baldwin on the road, 25-19, 25-19, 11-25 and 25-15.



Louisburg seniors (from left) Ava Jorn, Emma Prettyman, Allie Kennedy, Adyson Ross and Claire Brown were honored on Senior Night prior to Thursday's home match with Tonganoxie.

"Baldwin and Tonganoxie are both strong teams in our league," Willer said. "Baldwin is currently 24-1 and they have some incredible athletes on their team. Tonganoxie has improved greatly over the past year and their ball control and defense were rock solid on Thursday. They just wouldn't let anything drop. I give credit to both teams for playing so well, we just weren't able to match either team's level of play at the time.

"That being said, we are so thankful that we were able to honor our seniors on Thursday and are looking forward to putting in the work to continuously improve throughout these final weeks."

Against Tonganoxie, Kennedy closed out her home career on a strong note as she tallied a team-high 13 kills. Junior Hailey Sword was second on the team with 10.

Setter Megan Quinn recorded 35 assists, while senior libero led the Wildcat defense with a team-high 16 digs. Brown and Prettyman each had a team-best three blocks.

Brown had a big match for the Wildcats against Baldwin as she led Louisburg with 11 kills and had team-highs in aces (4) and blocks (2).

Ross and Williams each had 13 digs to lead Louisburg and Brown was right behind them with 12. Williams was also second on the team with nine kills and also had two blocks.

Week 4 Athlete of the Week: Claire Brown



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week four of the fall sports season, sponsored by Louisburg Family Dental.

CLAIRE BROWN, SENIOR, VOLLEYBALL

The Louisburg volleyball team had a successful stretch of matches last week and senior Claire Brown was a big reason for

that. Brown helped the Wildcats to a runner-up finish Saturday at the Louisburg Invitational as they won five straight matches to secure second place. Along with wins over Girard and Fort Scott on Thursday, Brown helped the Wildcats to an 7-2 record on the week.

Brown finished her week with a team-high 74 kills and also finished tied for the team best with 12 aces. Defensively, Brown was second on Louisburg with 77 digs as she plays all six rotations.

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

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Louisburg wins five straight to finish second at home tourney



The Louisburg volleyball team celebrates a big point against Shawnee Mission West on Saturday during the Louisburg Invitational.

After getting off to a rough start to its season, the Louisburg volleyball team needed something to go its way.

The Wildcats got just that Saturday at the Louisburg Invitational.

In a tournament in which Louisburg is the smallest school of seven, the Wildcats finished second overall with a 5-1 record on the day. Louisburg opened with a loss to Shawnee Mission East, but rallied to win five straight to secure the runner-up finish.

Louisburg improved its record to 10-10 on the season and has now won seven of its last eight matches.

“Saturday was a great day for our team, and it was important for us to finish strong after losing the first match of the day,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “Between last Thursday and Saturday we felt a positive shift in team

chemistry and we are really starting to play well together as a team. Our confidence is growing and I think that was evident in our play through a long day of six games.”

The Wildcats had to use a different tournament format than normal at the last minute and changed to a round-robin style. It didn’t take long for them to get tested.

Louisburg squared off with eventual champion Shawnee Mission East in the first match of the day, and despite leading the first set late, fell 25-23 and 25-23.



Senior Allie Kennedy goes up for a block against Olathe North on Saturday during the team’s home tournament.

The Wildcats were on the verge of their second loss against Shawnee Mission West. Louisburg won the first set 25-22, but lost the second 25-19.

In what was a back and forth third set, the Wildcats prevailed with a 27-25 win that ended on an ace by senior Adyson Ross. It was the first of many victories for Louisburg on the day.

“Yes, 1,000 percent that match was a turning point for us,”

Willer said. "We've been in so many close matches that go into extra sets and have been struggling to close them out, but we finished strong against Shawnee Mission West and that energy carried us through the rest of the day.

"Ending in extra points is always very intense, but we didn't shy away from the opportunities we were given. Finishing on an ace from Adyson was really just icing on the cake. She had a great tournament and for her to finish that match for our team that way was awesome."

Louisburg didn't lose a set the rest of match as it defeated Shawnee Mission South (25-12, 25-19), Olathe North (25-22, 25-14), Leavenworth (25-22, 25-21) and Basehor-Linwood (25-23, 25-18) in straight sets to get the second-place plaque.



Louisburg senior Emma Prettyman battles for the ball at the net Saturday against Shawnee Mission West.

It was a balanced effort throughout the day as several different players got attacks and blocks at the net, while others did the work on the defensive end.

Senior Claire Brown did the work on both ends as she led the Wildcats with 42 kills and was second on the team with 36 digs. Brown also had a team-high nine aces on a day where the team had a total of 36.

Senior middle blocker Allie Kennedy was second on the team with 33 kills to go along with seven blocks and four aces. Senior middle Emma Prettyman had 17 kills and a team-high eight blocks.

Junior outside hitter Hailey Sword added 23 kills and was second on the team with eight aces, while junior Madelyn Williams had 15 kills, three aces and was second on the team with 41 digs.

Defensively, Ross led the back row from her libero spot as she tallied a team-best 50 digs to go along with six aces.



Louisburg senior libero Adyson Ross makes a pass Saturday.

Ross led the team with 50 digs on the day.

Junior setter Megan Quinn also ran the offense well as she recorded 102 assists and also had six aces and 20 digs.

“I love looking back at our stats and seeing balance among all of our players,” Willer said. “We play our best when we can evenly distribute the ball to all of our hitters and can trust any one of them to put it down. When we see close to an even number of kills and digs from all players across the board, it’s easy to see that everyone contributed.

“When each player can step up at different moments, it relieves pressure on the individual because we can trust our teammates to help carry the load. We played some really great team volleyball.”

Louisburg will try and keep its momentum going tonight as it travels to No. 3 ranked Baldwin for a Frontier League dual. The Wildcats will then return home Thursday for Senior Night against Tonganoxie.