

Wildcats sweep Bonner Springs in road league dual



Louisburg's Delaney Nelsen and Izzy Moreland team up for a block Tuesday during the Wildcats' 3-0 win over Bonner Springs.

Fresh off a tournament win where the Louisburg volleyball team reeled off six straight wins, the Wildcats kept that momentum going Tuesday at Bonner Springs.

Louisburg made quick work of Bonner Springs as it rolled to a 25-16, 25-12 and 25-14 victory over the Braves in Frontier League action.

"I was very happy that our girls kept our momentum from Saturday heading into league play this week," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. 'I love that our team is growing in confidence and comfortability with each other, and I'm glad to see that in our play on the court as we continue to perform this season. Our setters did a great job of moving the ball around and balancing the offense among all of our hitters, who each stepped up at different times to make some big plays."

The Wildcats (8-5) jumped out to a fast start against the

Braves and never looked back. Louisburg's offense got rolling from the beginning and it started with its setters.

Freshman Adelyn Moore led the way with 17 assists on they night and senior Megan Quinn added 12.

Several hitters also had big nights as senior Madie Williams had a team-high 10 kills, while senior Hailey Sword finished with nine. Senior Katie Elpers was third on the team with five kills and sophomore Delaney Nelsen and senior Izzy Moreland had four and three, respectively.



Senior Katie Elpers rises up for a kill Tuesday against Bonner Springs.

Williams was also strong behind the service line with six aces, while Moore, Quinn and Moreland each finished with two.

Sword led the Wildcat defense with seven digs on the night,

while senior libero Ashlyn Berck, Williams and Quinn each finished with six. Junior Evyn Richardson had a team-high two blocks.

The Wildcats were also able to work in sophomore middle McKenna Lohse into the match for her first-ever varsity action.

"I loved that we were able to work McKenna into the rotation in the third set to see her varsity debut," Willer said. "She is doing a great job on JV this year and stepped into our rotation with no issues. Under the leadership/mentorship of Izzy Moreland, she did great."

With those seven straight wins, however, the Wildcats have now hit a lull in their schedule where they get a week off of game action. That all sets up a busy week for Louisburg next week that includes a league dual against Eudora, a triangular and its home tournament Saturday.

"As much as we would love to keep playing and continue the momentum, having a small break like this is nice heading into a big week," Willer said. "We are using the extra practice time this week to focus in on some fundamental skills as well as give our bodies some time to rest and recuperate before such a big week. Without having to worry about preparing for a specific opponent, we can really hone in on the aspects of the game specific to our team that we want to improve."

Week 2 Athlete of the Week:

Megan Quinn



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

MEGAN QUINN, SENIOR, VOLLEYBALL

Louisburg senior Megan Quinn helped the Wildcat volleyball team to a successful week that ended with a championship of the Frontenac Invitational on Saturday. In the tournament, Quinn finished with a team-high 11 aces and 78 assists to go along with 22 digs in the six-game invitational.

Earlier in the week, the Louisburg senior setter helped the Wildcats get their first win of the season over Burlington as Louisburg played nine matches on the week and went 7-2. In total, Quinn finished with 121 assists, 43 digs and 16 aces over those nine matches.

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

Previous winners:

Week 1: Declan Battle



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Wildcats win six straight to capture Frontenac Invite crown



Members of the Louisburg volleyball team that won the Frontenac Invitational are (front row, from left) Ashlyn Berck, Izzy Moreland, Hailey Sword, Madie Williams, Megan Quinn, Katie Elpers; (back row) Delaney Nelsen, Evyn Richardson, Adelyn Moore, Caileigh Kilgore and manager Kira Kundt.

FRONTENAC – Prior to Saturday, it had been a tough start to the season for the Louisburg volleyball team.

The Wildcats lost four of their first five matches to start the year and they were searching for positives when they entered the Frontenac Invitational on Saturday.

Their search came to an end as Louisburg reeled off six straight wins on its way to the Frontenac Invitational crown. The Wildcats rallied to defeat the host school in the championship match, 2-1, to complete what was a memorable day.

“Saturday’s tournament was huge for this team, and I am really proud of how we played together as a team all day to finish undefeated and win the whole thing,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “With our close losses last week, we knew that we really wanted to take advantage of the opportunity in front of us on Saturday with the chance to turn around our record and get going in the right direction.

“Even though we weren’t perfect and still faced some adversity throughout the day, we fought hard each match to battle back and put ourselves in a position to win. Saturday was an extremely long day as we started playing at 9:15 a.m. and didn’t finish until about 7:15 p.m., so I am proud of our ability to stay focused and energized through an exhausting six-game day.”

After cruising to five straight wins, the Wildcats faced some adversity against Frontenac in the championship as they lost the first set 19-25, but rallied back to take the second 25-18.

Louisburg (7-5) found itself down 10-17 late in the third set, only to rally and win 25-22 and capture the tourney title.



Hailey Sword (left) celebrates a big point with her Wildcat teammates against Ottawa last Thursday.

“Frontenac was a really solid team,” Willer said. “They were very scrappy on defense and served tough throughout the match, pushing us out of system more than we would like. Our first set had us in a little bit of a panic mode at times, and we saw more miscommunication and errors on our side of the net. Going into the second set, we knew we just needed to regroup, reset, and start fresh. Cleaning up the little things on our side of the court made a huge difference.

“I am most impressed with our girls being able to shake off the mistakes made in the first set to bounce back even stronger in the second. Even in the third, we dug ourselves a bit of a hole, but we dug deep and played with a ton of heart to fight back and win. I am so proud of the tenacity that

these girls showed."

In the championship match, the Wildcats got a big game at the net from seniors Hailey Sword and Madie Williams. They each finished with 11 kills to lead the Louisburg attack.

Defensively, Williams also had a big match with a team-high 17 digs, while freshman Adelyn Moore and senior libero Ashlyn Berck had 13 and 12, respectively. Junior Evyn Richardson tallied three blocks.

Louisburg had four aces in the match, including two from Berck. Offensively, senior setter Megan Quinn led the way 15 assists and Moore added 11.

Over six matches, Quinn had a strong day running the offense and behind the service line. She finished with a team-high 11 aces and had 78 assists.

Williams also had a big outing in her all-around position. She led Louisburg in both kills (43) and digs (45) and was second on the team with eight aces and nine blocks.

Sword, who plays all six rotations, was a factor all over the floor. She finished with 40 kills, 41 digs, five aces and four blocks.

Senior middle Izzy Moreland was big at the net as well with 28 kills and eight blocks. Richardson led Louisburg with 11 blocks.

Sophomores Delaney Nelsen and Caileigh Kilgore each had 15 kills and senior Katie Elpers finished with 12.



Megan Quinn sets up a teammate during the Wildcats' match with Ottawa last week.

“Megan and Madie did have great tournaments, and I think Hailey and Izzy did as well,” Willer said. “Our outsides established themselves as our go-to hitters, and it was clear that both Megan and Adelyn knew to find them when we needed a point. That being said, I think we saw a lot of positives from every single player out there throughout the day.

“I liked seeing in each match we had some different leaders in different categories, which is exactly what we want from a well-rounded team. One of our goals will be to continue to distribute the ball through all of our hitters offensively to maintain a well-balanced attack.”

Louisburg opened the tournament with a 25-23, 25-16 win over Girard and then rolled Baxter Springs, 25-7 and 25-13. The

Wildcats rounded out pool play with a 25-12, 25-13 win over St. Mary's-Colgan and downed Chanute, 25-22 and 25-20.

The Wildcats reached the semifinals against Fort Scott and held on for a 25-20 and 25-23 win to advance to the championship.

Willer liked what she saw from her entire team during its championship run and the way they pulled together.

"Our team chemistry was another positive for us," Willer said. "When one player was maybe struggling in a certain aspect of the game, the rest of the team rallied around her to continue to encourage each other and lift each other up. We love to see that on those long days."

Louisburg will try to build on its momentum today when it travels to Bonner Springs for a Frontier League dual.

Wildcats lose five-set thriller to Ottawa

Louisburg made the trip to Ottawa on Thursday for a Frontier League dual and nearly rallied for a big road win.

The Wildcats won the first set 25-21, but lost the next two, 25-11 and 25-20. Louisburg put together a strong fourth set to win 25-21 and tied the match at 2-all.

Ottawa held off a late charge from the Wildcats to win the final set, 15-10.

Hailey Sword and Madie Williams had big nights at the net with 14 and 13 kills, respectively. Senior Izzy Moreland tallied three blocks to lead the front row.

Senior setter Megan Quinn led the Wildcat offense with 21 assists and freshman setter Adelyn Moore and 17.

Defensively, Williams (15), Quinn (13) and Sword (12) all finished with double-digit digs.

Louisburg had a tough time containing one of the top players in the Frontier League, Emery Keebaugh. The Ottawa senior led all players with 26 kills as she hit from all over the floor.

"The Ottawa match was a tough battle throughout, and I am proud of the fight that we put up after losing sets 2 and 3," coach Leanna Willer said. "Their outstanding player Emery Keebaugh is tough to stop, and it's tough to beat a team like that who is scrappy on defense and has her as an offensive weapon in all 6 rotations. We are looking forward to a rematch with them at their home tournament in a couple of weeks."

Louisburg volleyball downs Burlington for first win of season



Louisburg junior Evyn Richardson goes up for a kill during

Tuesday's home match against Piper. The Wildcats defeated Burlington, 2-0, before falling to Piper, 2-1.

It was a mixed bag of sorts for the Louisburg volleyball team Tuesday at home.

On one hand, the Wildcats picked up their first win of the season with a 25-5 and 26-24 victory over Burlington and used that momentum to go up early in their match against Piper.

Louisburg was primed for a sweep, but the Pirates had other ideas. The Wildcats fell to the Pirates, 23-25, 25-12 and 25-22 to get a split in their home triangular.

"It was great to get that first win under our belt," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "We came out ready to roll in that first set and never looked back. It was a fun way to start the night. We are currently battling the challenge of remaining consistent, but I think we are making progress toward better consistency every day with the work we are putting in during practice, and learning from our games."

The Wildcats got out to a fast start against Burlington as they jumped out to a 19-2 advantage in the first set, but had to battle in the second.



Senior Megan Quinn sets up a teammate Tuesday against Piper.

Louisburg (1-4) took a 14-6 lead and appeared on its way to another easy win. Burlington had other ideas as it battled back to eventually even it up at 23-all.

Wildcat junior Evyn Richardson recorded a kill to make it 24-23, before Burlington tied it up once again. Sophomore Delaney Nelsen registered a kill to make it 25-24 and Louisburg sealed the win on an ace from Megan Quinn.

Senior Hailey Sword and Richardson each led the Wildcats with seven kills and senior Katie Elpers finished with five. Setters Adelyn Moore and Quinn finished with 11 and 10 assists, respectively.

Sword and Moore each led the Wildcat defense with six digs. From behind the service line, Louisburg tallied six aces in the match, including two from Quinn.

Louisburg got out to good start against Piper as it was able to take the first set, but struggled to get going in the second. The Wildcats bounced back nicely in third and appeared well on their way to a victory with an 18-14 lead.



Louisburg senior Hailey Sword digs up a ball Tuesday at home.

Piper had other ideas as it ended the match on an 11-4 run to get the victory over Louisburg.

“Losing that second match to Piper in three was tough, but like I said, I think it provided some really great learning moments for our whole team,” Willer said. “Making 19 more errors than the other team makes it tough to win a match. Walking into practice the next day, we were very focused on specific things that we wanted to improve after that game, and as a coach that’s all I can ask for.”

Sword led the Wildcats at the net once again as she tallied 10

kills. Senior Madie Williams finished with seven kills and also had a team-high three aces.

Moore led Louisburg in assists with 14 and Quinn added 12 to go along with two aces. Defensively, Williams had a big night for Louisburg with 11 digs and senior Ashlyn Berck added seven.

Louisburg will try and bounce back tonight as it gets back into league play. The Wildcats travel to Ottawa for a 6:30 p.m. start.

Louisburg volleyball falls to De Soto, Olathe West



Louisburg's Evyn Richardson (left) and Hailey Sword team up for a block during a match earlier this season.

DE SOTO – Going against bigger programs can be difficult and the Louisburg volleyball faced its fair share of challenges Thursday.

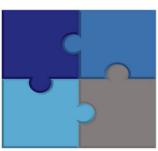
The Wildcats traveled to De Soto for a triangular with Olathe West and left with a pair of setbacks. Louisburg lost to Olathe West 24-12 and 25-16 and also fell to De Soto 25-19 and 25-20.

"Thursday presented a couple of tough opponents for us," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "I thought we did a good job of keeping ourselves in the game and battling throughout the night. There were also a couple of key things that we worked on in practice Wednesday after last Tuesday's game that I was happy to see improvement in on Thursday."

Louisburg senior Hailey Sword led the Wildcat offense at the net with 10 kills on the night and senior Madie Williams finished with seven.

Middle blockers Izzy Moreland Evyn Richardson also played strong as Moreland finished with six kills to go along with a team-high four blocks. Richardson had three blocks on the night, as did senior Katie Elpers.

Offensive players
Megan Quinn Wild



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“Both middles, Izzy and Evyn, did a good job of making themselves available in the offense and capitalizing on their opportunities,” Willer said. “Also, I thought that Megan had a great defensive night as she actually led our team in digs. Very proud of her.”

Senior libero Bronwynn Williams and Madie Williams each tallied 10 digs on the night, while senior Ashlyn Berck led Louisburg from behind the service line with three aces.

Louisburg (0-3) is back in action tonight as the Wildcats host

Burlington and Piper in a triangular. The Wildcats will play Burlington at 4:30 p.m., and Piper at 6:30.

Wildcats fall in home opener to Baldwin in four sets



Louisburg senior Madie Williams sends the ball over the net Tuesday during the Wildcats' season opener against Baldwin at Louisburg High School.

In its season opener Tuesday, Louisburg found itself in a rematch of the sub-state championship match from a season ago.

The Wildcats hosted Baldwin, a team they defeated on their way to a fourth-place state tournament finish.

Unfortunately for Louisburg, the result wasn't quite the same this time around.

Baldwin won the first two sets and held on for a 3-1 victory (25-20, 25-18, 19-25, 27-25) over Louisburg. Despite the early deficit, the Wildcats battled back to almost force a fifth set.

"I thought we played pretty well for the first match of the year," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "We saw some nerves for sure in that first set, but I think we settled in pretty

well and fought hard throughout the match. There were some impressive rallies and great plays made by both teams, which made for a fun night. Regardless of the outcome, I am proud of how hard we fought and how we stayed together working as a team throughout the match."

Through the first two sets, the Wildcats had a tough time slowing down the Bulldog attack at the net – more specifically Fisayo Afonja.

The Baldwin senior, who is one of the top players in Class 4A this season, made an impact all over the floor. Afonja finished with a team-high 31 kills and also had 21 digs with her play in the back row as she made things difficult on the Wildcats.

"She is a truly impressive player all around," Willer said of Afonja. "The toughest thing about her is that she can come from anywhere and hit any tempo set. She also has a crazy high vertical, and with that extra hang time she can turn in the air to find the open court. We started to do a better job of finding her in the third and fourth sets to put up a better block, so that helped us compete better with their strong offense."



Louisburg seniors Katie Elpers (left) and Izzy Moreland team up for a block Tuesday against Baldwin.

The Wildcats got out to a shaky start with the back-to-back 25-20 and 25-18 losses, but gathered themselves and put together a strong performance the rest of the way.

After a convincing 25-19 win in the third set, Louisburg found itself in a back-and-forth match with the Bulldogs, but after forcing extra points, fell 27-25.

Louisburg senior Madie Williams had a big night to lead the Wildcats as she finished with a team-high 26 kills as she had plenty of opportunities from both the front and back rows. She also led the team defensively with 19 digs.

“Madie had an awesome night,” Willer said. “She established herself early, and continued to be the go to hitter for both of our setters. They know that they can give the ball to her at any time and she’s going to make the most of it. I was also pleased to see her court awareness shine through as she made

some very smart decisions with her attack choices. She's not afraid to go up and take a huge swing or mix in a tip, and we saw how successful that can be.

"Additionally, I thought she passed very well and made some big plays on defense. She has a natural ability to read the court and anticipate what's coming next, which is huge for us."

It was also the first time the Wildcats implemented their two-setter offense with senior Megan Quinn and freshman Adelyn Moore. Quinn finished with a team-high 25 assists and Moore had 19 of her own. Quinn also had a strong game defensively with 12 digs.

"I think they both did a great job," Willer said. "They spread the ball around, but also found a way to find our hot hitters as much as they could. I love seeing their relationship in between plays, time outs, and sets as well. Megan is a wonderful leader and has really taken Adelyn under her wing to help our team be the best we can be."

Senior Hailey Sword also had a big game at the net with 11 kills, and defensively she was second on the team with 17 digs.



Louisburg libero Bronwynn Williams chases down a ball Tuesday against Baldwin.

Also on defense, senior libero Bronwynn Williams tallied 17 digs, while senior Izzy Moreland finished with a team-high five blocks from her middle blocker spot.

"I thought our serve receive passing was pretty strong for the majority of the night, and I loved our defensive effort," Willer said. "I think every person on the floor stepped up in moments where they were able to shine a little bit, so I love seeing that well-rounded aspect of our team."

Louisburg will try and bounce back today as the Wildcats travel to De Soto for a triangular with Olathe West. Matches begin at 5 p.m.

Louisburg volleyball hoping for another state run in 2023



Louisburg senior Hailey Sword is one of three returning starters off of last season's state tournament team that finished fourth overall.

Last year, the Louisburg volleyball team was one of the few teams left standing when the season came to a close.

After the Wildcats upset No. 1 seed Baldwin for a sub-state title, Louisburg made a nice run through the state tournament and eventually ended with a fourth-place finish.

However, the Wildcats had to say goodbye to four senior starters off that team and head coach Leanna Willer has had to do a little bit of reshuffling – like many coaches do from year to year.

As tough as some have it, the Wildcats still return three starters from a year ago and have a seven-member senior class in hopes of reaching the state tournament, yet again.

"We did lose four amazing seniors, but we also have a lot of experience coming back," Willer said. "This team will be a good mix of 'old' and young as we will have all four classes represented in our starting rotation. It's great to have strong senior leaders as well as talented underclassmen come

together as one unit.

"We are really working on that team chemistry right now to solidify our group. We do have three senior returners maintaining a similar role that they had last year, but the other four are stepping up into bigger roles to fill some of the holes left by last year's graduating class."

Louisburg has a good foundation to build from with those three returning starters. Seniors Madie Williams and Hailey Sword will return as starting outside hitters and will play all six rotations after playing similar roles last season.

Senior setter Megan Quinn returns to lead the Wildcat offense after eclipsing 1,000 assists a year ago.



Senior Madie Williams returns as an outside hitter for the Wildcats and will play all six rotations.

"Having Megan, Hailey, and Madie return is huge for us as they gained tons of experience at a high level, especially toward the end of the season," Willer said. "They have stepped up as our go to players all summer long as leaders on the court and

the ones we look to to 'get the job done' in tough situations.

"Hailey and Madie will hold down the fort for us on the outside, playing all the way around, so their defense and serve receive is just as important as their work at the net. Megan has done a great job thus far of running our offense and she will continue to have a big role as our setter and as a defender."

One difference this year is the Wildcats will be running a two-setter offense and Quinn will be joined by freshman Adelyn Moore.

Throughout the summer and the beginning of practice, the Wildcats have worked Moore into the varsity lineup and she has learned a lot along the way from her senior counterpart.

"Megan and Adelyn will be 'co-piloting' our team this year as our setters," Willer said. "Running a system with two setters allows us to bring in more offensive weapons and a stronger defensive look as we will be able to have bigger blockers with our right sides against other team's outside hitters. Megan and Adelyn have done an awesome job this summer working together to create a cohesive style for our players, so that hitter/setter connections can be established.



Louisburg senior setter Megan Quinn eclipsed the 1,000 assist mark last season.

"I love having Megan there to mentor Adelyn and show her the ropes with the varsity team, and Adelyn is stepping up with no hesitation to play at a high level right away. We are very excited about this duo for the season."

Other than Sword and Williams, the Wildcats will have some new faces at the net. They feature a pair of middle hitters in senior Izzy Moreland and junior Evyn Richardson. Moreland has seen some varsity time the last two seasons, Richardson is in her first season at varsity, while sophomore McKenna Lohse could also see some varsity time there.

Sophomore Caileigh Kilgore and senior Katie Elpers will swing from the right side this year, as will sophomore Delaney Nelsen, who is recovering from an injury. Nelsen also saw some

varsity playing time last season.

Defensively, the Wildcats will be anchored by a pair of seniors. Bronwynn Williams will be the team's starting libero, while Ashlyn Berck will start as a defensive specialist. Both players were in the varsity rotation at times last season and Williams saw playing time in 25 matches.

"The strength of this team will be our athleticism and versatility," Willer said. "We have girls at all positions who could play a variety of positions on the court, and we have very strong offensive weapons who can be a threat from anywhere. With one lineup, we are able to get a lot of different looks offensively, which works to our advantage. Additionally, running a two-setter system allows us to have more hitters on the court at all times, and we have the depth to be really strong across the board."

Although the Wildcats have several new faces on the court this season, they still have the same goal, and that is to end their season at the state tournament in Hutchinson.

"As a team, we are maintaining high expectations for ourselves based on last year's finish," Willer said. "While we recognize areas for growth and improvement, we are returning with confidence that we can get back to the state tournament again at the end of the season if we play to our potential. The key for us is to maintain high expectations without putting too much pressure on ourselves. We plan to take the season one day at a time, focusing on just one match at a time and getting better every day."

Louisburg will begin that journey today as the Wildcats host Baldwin for a Frontier League dual. Varsity is slated to begin around 6:30 p.m.

"Practices have been going well," Willer said. "At all three levels, we have a great energy and sense of competitiveness every time we walk into the gym, and the girls are getting

after it with a sense of purpose. I think we are all amped and ready for the season to truly begin this week. Getting a few games under our belt is always good so that we can have specific things to focus on each practice."

Wildcat fall teams underway with successful first week of practice



Louisburg senior Wyatt Holland takes a handoff from backup quarterback Alex Saad during a practice last week.

Before the record setting heat and humidity that is currently smothering Louisburg and the surrounding areas came in, the Wildcat fall sports teams got in a solid first five days of practice last week.

The first day of practice opened the fall season on Aug. 15 as the Wildcat football, boys soccer, cross country and volleyball programs officially kicked off the season.

Participation numbers were up for most of the sports, while football, soccer and cross country had a good week's worth of practice outdoors. With heat and humidity at record levels this week, all outdoor sports will be forced to hold practices early in the morning.

It was a successful season for all four teams last year and it started with the Wildcat football program as they ran through the Frontier League with an undefeated record and earned its first league title since 2018.

The Wildcats currently have 76 players out for football under second-year coach Drew Harding, which about 10 more than a year ago.

“First couple days of practice have been going well,” Harding said. “There is a lot of energy on the field during practice, which is great to have. You can tell they are happy to be back playing football again.”

Harding kept his players busy over the summer to help prep them for the season. The Wildcats took part in several scrimmages, 7-on-7 and skill sessions, to go along with their normal team camp and weights.

“This allowed everyone to get on the same page and be ready to roll once we started practice in the fall,” Harding said. “The goal is that everything over the summer carries over and we can just continue to get better at what we do once the season starts.

“We want to continue to come together as a team and continue to build camaraderie. We also want to make sure we have the base schemes in all three phases installed and understood before we start putting in opponent specific plans. We want to see athletes compete and separate themselves from one another to show who is ready to play on Friday nights.”



Louisburg sophomore Caileigh Kilgore goes through a hitting drill last week during tryouts.

The Louisburg volleyball program is coming off another state tournament run that saw the Wildcats finish fourth at the Class 4A tourney. That success brought a lot of interest as 39 players tried out, and 32 are currently rostered between the three teams.

"The first three days of the season with tryouts were pretty great," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "Everyone came with positive attitudes and high energy to push through the challenges of tryouts. After the team was finalized, we got to work right away on Thursday. The energy in the gym is great, and everyone is aware of the high expectations we have for ourselves heading into the season. Both the girls and the coaches are excited to be back in the gym getting better every day."

Wildcat volleyball also had a busy summer schedule the held a

team camp to start, before competing in a summer league and held several open gyms in June and July.

Varsity level players traveled to the University of Nebraska team camp and also competed a tournament in Andale.

"While summer is busy with all kinds of activities, vacations and summer jobs, we appreciate the time and effort all of the girls put in to dedicate themselves to the team and the sport of volleyball," Willer said. "It also gives us coaches more time to get to know them heading into the season and to develop relationships earlier on so we can get right into volleyball here in August.

"During these first few weeks we hope to foster a culture of competition in our gym where the girls are all challenging each other every single day. We are all on the same page with where we want to be at the end of the season, so during these first few weeks we are focused on building a strong foundation that will help us get there with an emphasis on team bonding/connections, fundamentals, and conditioning."



Louisburg senior Emma Vohs is a returning state medalist for the Louisburg cross country team.

The Louisburg cross country team also had a big season last year, especially on the girls side. The Wildcat girls qualified for state and Emma Vohs left Wamego with a state medal.

As far as numbers go, the cross country group is a little down this year with 22, but they still have high aspirations again.

"The runners are excited for the season," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "The girls team is planning for big things again this year and the 'young' boys team is looking great."

Many of those runners have taken to the streets over the summer to get their work in as they prepare for another difficult slate of meets in 2023.

"We had a consistent group of both LHS and LMS runners all summer," Reece said. "Because of the good turnout, we can get

going on the harder workouts earlier in the season.

"The beginning of the season always creates a challenge with runners being at different points of their base building. We look to build base for all and start working on racing skills and workouts as the weeks progress."



Louisburg junior Emmett White goes through a drill last week at practice.

The Louisburg soccer team will have some rebuilding to do this season as the Wildcats had to say goodbye to 15 seniors from a year ago.

There will certainly be several players to help fill the void as 41 athletes came out for soccer this fall.

"There's been a huge precedent set with the program, and it's definitely something that's been instilled in the players for quite some time," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Since I've joined the program, the junior and senior leaders have

been outstanding at organizing summer workouts and activities for the team. It's been great seeing that sort of self-motivation and leadership from them. We've had enough time together as a program over the summer that the first days of tryouts have been smooth as can be. Very little instruction needed, and the guys have been able to jump right in with what we're asking from them."

The Wildcats opened their summer hosting a youth camp and then went right in to summer workouts. Louisburg also held its annual team camp to go along with weights sessions.

"With only two returning starters from last year, we're going to have some growing pains for sure," Bovaird said. "The first couple of weeks will need to be spent getting in match shape and gelling as a team with so many players being in new positions or at a new level. We open our season with Leavenworth, who was our final regular season game last year. Back then, both varsity and JV had awesome games, but those were totally different teams. We'll see how well we've reloaded for this year, but I'm feeling pretty good."

Ross named Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year



Louisburg senior Adyson Ross was voted by the head coaches as the 2023 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year.

No matter what sport Adyson Ross competed in this season, she was one of – if not the best – athlete on the field or court.

Her postseason honors more than bare that out.

Ross was a first-team All-Frontier League selection in two of those and also earned all-state honors as well. No matter the sport, she made her team better.

Her success in all three sports – volleyball, basketball and soccer – were just some of the reasons Ross was named the 2023 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year.

“Being named athlete of the year means so much,” Ross said. “There are so many outstanding athletes at LHS. To be selected for this award is a huge honor and I am so grateful.”

Ross’ memorable senior year started in the fall with the volleyball program. The Lady Cats upset No. 1 seed Baldwin in the sub-state championship and eventually had a fourth-place finish at the state tournament.

However, the season didn’t start out the best. Louisburg had trouble finding that team chemistry it was looking for, and it seemed like they were missing something. Louisburg coach Leanna Willer asked Ross, who is one of the team’s top hitters, to change positions and play the libero spot.

It was shortly after Ross made the move, that the team took off and started to play some of its best volleyball – including a run to the sub-state championship.

“There were so many special moments from this year, but I think one that stands out the most was during volleyball season.” Ross said. “We were playing Baldwin for the championship and it was game point. I was on the line to serve and I just remember thinking in that moment that everything

I'd been working for had come down to that one serve. When we won the point it was just the most special and rewarding feeling. It is something that I will remember forever."

That season led to second team All-Frontier League honors as a libero as she recorded 363 digs on the season to go along with 67 kills and 41 aces.

Then came basketball where Ross was a starting guard on a Lady Cat team that reached 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.

With all that, Ross was named to the All-Frontier League first team and earned second team all-state honors. She was also named to the Missouri vs. Kansas all-star game. Two years ago, she was also a part of the best finish in school history when Louisburg finished third at the state tournament.

She reached the state final four with all three programs during her time at Louisburg.

"The experience was so amazing," Ross said. "I might be biased, but Louisburg is really a one of a kind place. You just don't really see the same amount of support for athletics in many other towns. To be able to play in the state final four for three different sports was so cool."



Louisburg's Adyson Ross poses with two of her coaches, Adrienne Lane and Leanna Willer, after receiving the Athlete of the Year award.

On the pitch, Ross had one of her best seasons as the team's starting midfielder. She helped Louisburg to a spot in the regional championship against Bishop Miege.

She also put together a strong final campaign as 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.

"Even though we didn't win that last game, I remember looking up in the stands before the game and seeing the stadium filled with purple, and the amount of student support was crazy," Ross said. "I just thought to myself, how special it is to be a part of something like that. For so many people to come out and support like they did was amazing, despite the team we were going up against."

Playing three sports at a high level does take a toll at times, and there were moments Ross wasn't sure if being a

three-sport athlete was for her.

"Continuing all three sports through high school is definitely something I'm proud of," Ross said. "There were a lot of times when I considered dropping a sport so I could spend time to focusing on another. As a freshman I didn't see myself continuing all three through senior year, because I didn't think it was possible to fully commit to each sport.

"My coaches were very supportive and flexible, and all of them were totally on board with it, even though it meant sometimes missing workouts and preseason stuff due to conflicts with another sport. I feel like playing three was more of an advantage to me as an athlete. It helped me to be versatile, and not having an off-season kept me in great shape."

Even with all her successes, Ross is putting athletics in the rear view mirror, for now. She will be attending Kansas State University and is ready to focus more on the academic side of things.

Still, Ross knows she will never forget all the memories she made during her time at Louisburg.

"Even though I'm choosing not to continue my athletic career past high school, I feel so blessed for all the memories and friendships sports have given me. They will for sure last a lifetime."

Previous winners:

2018: Isabelle Holtzen

2019: Carson Buffington

2020: Reilly Ratliff-Becher

2021: Alyse Moore

2022: Delaney Wright

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.