

# Crossley excited to lead Louisburg wrestling as head coach



***Shawn Crossley was hired as Louisburg's new head wrestling coach during the board of education meeting earlier this month. He takes over from Bobby Bovaird, who spent the last 14 seasons as head coach.***

Wrestling has always been a big part of Shawn Crossley's life.

Whether it was as a high school wrestler, or later becoming a coach, the passion for the sport has never left Crossley.

Now, he gets to use that passion to lead the program at his alma mater.

During the Louisburg USD 416 Board of Education meeting

earlier this month, Crossley was hired as the new head coach for the Wildcat wrestling program. Crossley takes over from former coach Bobby Bovaird, who resigned his post last month after 14 years in the position.

“I couldn’t be prouder and more excited to take over the Louisburg wrestling program,” Crossley said. “I am honored and extremely grateful that the administration and the school board entrusted me with this opportunity.”

Crossley has served as an assistant coach for the Wildcat program for the last several seasons, so he is already a familiar face in the wrestling room.

It is a transition that he believes will be a smooth one as he tries to continue to build up the program – not just at the high school level.

“The fact that I have been an assistant coach at the middle school and high school levels for quite a few years will be incredibly beneficial for myself, our coaches, our parents, and our wrestlers during the transition,” Crossley said. “I’ve also coached a large number of our wrestlers since they started in the sport through our youth club.

“One of the best decisions Coach Bovaird made, and he and I worked to achieve together, was aligning the wrestling program from top to bottom. Having the opportunity to coach them at the beginning of their wrestling journey, and also being lucky enough to coach them up until their high school wrestling career ends is a blessing. I think it was imperative to keep this alignment and cohesiveness.”

Crossley has also been very involved in the Wildcat Wrestling Club and helped start the kids program back in 2016. He still helps coach the club, along with the East Kansas Eagles Club.

It is that at experience at all levels is something he believes is important and it has



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“I just love the sport of wrestling and am extremely passionate about this sport,” Crossley said. “I’m thankful for what the sport provided me. I’m passionate about providing kids in our community, our state, and our region the opportunity to wrestle at the local and national level. I’m

passionate about Louisburg wrestling and giving back to the school and community that has always supported me, my daughter, and my family. Being a wrestling coach is not a seasonal thing for me. I coach this sport year round.”

Getting an opportunity to coach his alma mater was something Crossley couldn’t pass up. Crossley, who is a 1998 graduate of Louisburg, was a 3-time state qualifier and a member of two Frontier League championship teams.

“As an LHS wrestling alumni, this program is very important to me, and obviously very near and dear to my heart,” Crossley said. “It is unbelievably special to come full circle like it has. With that being said, I don’t think I ever could have envisioned becoming a head coach while wrestling in high school. I turned down opportunities to wrestle in college after graduation, and at that time felt like I was walking away from a lifelong commitment with a little bit of relief. That’s a decision I have regretted for a long time. This sport has a funny way of sucking you back if you give it a chance.”

Crossley believes there will be a lot of similarities between his coaching style and with that of Bovaird’s. The expectations that have always been within the program will stay the same.

“Coach Bovaird has done an incredible job with this program,” Crossley said. “He and I share a lot of the same philosophical ideals when it comes to coaching. We both believe in coaching the student athlete as a whole. He has been a great mentor, leader, and friend to me throughout the years. I plan to continue the path we’ve been on, which aligns our program K-12, and has proven to be the successful model to increasing our numbers year in and year out.

“It will be of the utmost importance to continue our academic success in the classroom. What people should expect from our team in years to come is accountability, discipline,

mental/physical toughness, aggressiveness, and that we will be the hardest working team in the state.”

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## Moore leads Wildcat wrestling with state runner-up finish



***Louisburg senior Ashton Moore wrestles in the 215-pound state championship Saturday in Salina. Moore finished second overall.***

SALINA – In the final match of his wrestling career, Ashton Moore found himself competing for a state championship.

It was exactly the place he envisioned himself being, even before the season started. The result, however, was a different story.

Moore's dreams of a state title were dashed Saturday at the Class 4A state wrestling tournament in Salina. Smoky Valley's Parker Gardner ended his run with a 13-5 major decision at 215 pounds.

As disappointing as the loss was for Moore, looking back on his long wrestling career helped ease the pain – as did the second place state medal.

"It was tough taking that loss," Moore said. "I was pretty down about it, but then I had a moment that put things more into perspective for me. After our practice on Friday, Coach (Bobby) Bovaird took us up to the top of the arena to talk about the tournament. Sitting there I remembered being in that same spot as a sixth grader watching the championship round there. At that age I thought those guys were amazing and the toughest people I'd ever seen.

"So after my loss I thought back to that moment being a sixth grader and I was able to realize how far I've come. To see myself at that level now made me very proud I was able to make it to that stage."

Moore, who finished the season with a 41-3 record, had a successful first day on Friday. He opened with a pin of Hiawatha's Gabriel Johnson in the first round.

In the quarterfinals, Moore earned a 4-2 decision over Augusta's Devin Carroll. Then, in the semifinals, Moore faced off with a familiar Frontier League foe in Ottawa's Seth Ferguson.





***Louisburg senior Ashton Moore earned a second place medal Saturday at the Class 4A state tournament in Salina. He ended his season with a 41-3 record.***

Moore took care of business as he won an 8-4 decision over Ferguson to advance to the championship against Gardner.

Gardner got on the board early against Moore as he registered three takedowns of the Louisburg senior to build a big lead.

“That championship match was a tough one,” Moore said. “I hadn’t seen that kid at any other tournaments, so I didn’t know a ton about him. He had a quick single leg and you don’t see that much at heavier weights like 215.

“Overall I really enjoyed this year. I was lucky enough to have a full season and be able to finish out my season healthy. It was a very bittersweet moment when that last match was over, but I’m very grateful I got to spend these last four years with such great teammates and coaches.”



Despite the loss, it was a still a successful season for Moore who recorded his second straight state medal and became the ninth Wildcat to wrestle for a state crown.

“Watching Ashton earn his way to the state championship match was incredible,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “He put in so much work throughout the season and he’s been an outstanding leader for our program. Being able to sit in his corner at that level on the biggest stage was really special.

“Finishing as the state runner-up is a huge accomplishment, and I couldn’t be prouder of how he competed and represented our program. This is the seventh straight year our program has had a state semifinalist, and Ashton is now one of nine Louisburg wrestlers who have earned the title of state finalist.”

The Wildcat program also had six other wrestlers compete at the state tournament, including two on the girls side.

Louisburg senior Brayden Yoder went 1-1 on Friday at 190 pounds after a close 3-2 loss to Mulvane’s Cameron Hagerman in the first round, but Yoder bounced back to get a 11-3 major decision over Goodland’s Logan Franz.



***Louisburg senior Brayden Yoder finished 1-2 at the Class 4A state wrestling tournament in Salina.***

In his first match on Saturday, Yoder was eliminated by Abilene's Pierce Casteel. Yoder lost by a 4-1 decision ending his season with a 35-12 record.

Seniors Canaan Clayton (120), Mika McKitrick (132) and sophomore Levi Cotter (106) each finished the tournament with an 0-2 mark.

On the girls side, sophomore Leola Eslinger went 1-1 on the first day at 145 pounds. After she was pinned in her first match by Marysville's Ella Johnson, Eslinger responded with a pin of her own against Prairie View's Kimberlee Eastwood in the first round of consolation to earn the program's first state win.

Eslinger (23-19) saw her season come to a close in her first match Saturday after she was pinned in the second period by Pratt's Miranda Webb.



***Louisburg sophomore Leola Eslinger records a takedown Saturday at the state tournament in Salina.***

Freshman Brooklyn DeWeese (31-13) went 0-2 at 115 pounds in what was her first state tournament.

"It's always tough when you see kids put in the time, the effort, and the sacrifice, only to come up just short of their goal," Bovaird said. "In that way, wrestling can be a pretty brutal sport. Thursday night after we had our last practice, I talked to the team about the idea of competitive greatness, inspired by the great John Wooden. I told them that they needed to be prepared, to be disciplined, and to be focused.

"This one tournament will not define their season or who they are as competitors; they've accomplished great things already and they've prepared themselves for something much bigger than just a single tournament like state. Each of them grew and improved, and that's what really matters in the long run."

The state tournament ended what was a successful season for

the Wildcat program as they try and build for the future.

“It has definitely been a season of growth for our program, and we’ve made a ton of huge milestones,” Bovaird said. “I’m especially proud of how this group of wrestlers has contributed to the foundation of our program. We had wrestlers pushing themselves to new levels, we had a strong presence at the state tournament, and we continued to make an impact in our sport. While we always aim for more, I’m proud of the work these athletes put in. The young men and women in this program are building something special, and this season was definitely another major step forward for us, for a lot of reasons. We had our first girls state qualifiers with Brooklyn and Leola. We boasted our biggest numbers ever (65 total, with 54 boys and 11 girls). We had our first ever girls dual. We had another winning dual season, and we finished in the top 3 at Frontier League after several seasons toward the bottom.

“The season motto was ‘Carpe Diem’ (Seize the Day), and from day one, that’s what we asked our kids to do. They learned to step up and face adversity, take on opportunities, and be fearless in the face of challenges. In the bigger scheme of things, that’s what it’s all about. Not winning matches, medals, or trophies, but learning how to be champions in life. I’m proud to say that the young athletes who stick it out through our tough sport will emerge much better prepared for being successful beyond the mat.”

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## **Bovaird steps down as head coach of Louisburg wrestling**





***Louisburg wrestling head coach Bobby Bovaird announced this past season would be his last with the Wildcat program.***

After 14 years as the head coach of the Louisburg High School wrestling program, Bobby Bovaird has resigned from his position.

He made the announcement Wednesday (Mar. 5) in a post on social media and it was a decision he didn't make lightly.

"Wrestling has been a major part of my life for 33 years," Bovaird said. "First as a competitor, then as an assistant coach, and then as a head coach. However, coaching three programs—boys' soccer, boys' wrestling, and girls' wrestling—has been a tremendous commitment, and I know when it's time for a change. This choice is about doing what's best for the program, my family, and myself.

"Before this season began, I knew it would be my last, and now that it has come to an end, I feel it's the right time to hand the reins over to someone new."



Bovaird took over the Wildcat wrestling program during the 2011-12 season and has coached multiple state qualifiers and medalists during that span. He also helped start the Wildcat Wrestling Club.

"I am incredibly proud of what we have built together," Bovaird said in his post. "From the Wildcat Wrestling Club to the middle school and high school teams, Louisburg wrestling has never been stronger. This year's season motto, Carpe Diem, was no coincidence—I wanted our wrestlers to embrace the importance of stepping up, seizing opportunities, and tackling challenges head-on. And that's exactly what you have done.

"More than the wins, medals, and trophies, my greatest hope is that the lessons you've learned—the resilience, discipline, and fearless mindset—will stay with you far beyond the mat."

Bovaird, who will stay on as the boys soccer coach next season, went on to thank those who have helped better the Wildcat program.

"To my wrestlers, past and present—you are the heart of this program, and I can't thank you enough for your hard work, dedication, and belief in what we've built," Bovaird said. "The class of 2025 will be the last senior class I coach in wrestling, and I have no doubt they—and the wrestlers who follow—will continue to push this program forward.

"I don't yet know who the next head coach will be, but that doesn't matter. The foundation is strong, the culture is set, and the future of Louisburg wrestling is bright. Keep working, keep believing, and keep competing. While I am stepping away from wrestling, I will continue to teach at LHS and coach boys' soccer. Louisburg is home, and I am grateful for every athlete, family, and supporter who has been part of this journey."

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# Yoder, Moore win regional titles as Wildcats qualify five for state



***Louisburg senior Brayden Yoder pounds his chest after his upset victory over Chanute's Cade Small in the semifinals of the 190-pound bracket Saturday at the Class 4A regional tournament.***

ALTAMONT – In a day full of competition, five Louisburg wrestlers saw their season extended for another week.

Ashton Moore and Brayden Yoder earned regional titles Saturday at the Class 4A regional tournament Saturday at Labette County High School, while Mika McKitrick, Canaan Clayton and Levi

Cotter all punched their tickets as well to the state tournament.

In a day full of ups and downs, Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird was happy to see those five move on to the final week of the season.

“Regionals is always a tournament where we experience the highest of highs and the lowest of lows,” Bovaird said. “Seeing kids like Mika, Brayden and Levi qualify after having such awesome seasons was awesome to witness. The guys who did make it through to state earned their way, and I’m so excited for how they get to end their season this weekend in Salina.”

Maybe no one had a better day than Yoder, who came in as the No. 5 seed in the 190-pound bracket and upset his way to a regional crown.

Yoder (34-10) opened the tournament with a 4-1 decision over Frontenac’s Alonzo Burke and then squared off with Chanute’s Cade Small, who was also the tournament’s No. 1 seed.

The Louisburg senior jumped out to an early 3-point lead on a takedown in the semifinals and held off Small for a 4-2 decision to earn his first-ever state berth. It was also a big win for Yoder in the rankings as Small was No. 4 in the state.



***Brayden Yoder gets a takedown of Paola's Maxwell Worden in the finals of the 190-pound bracket.***

"Qualifying for state was my main goal going into the regional tournament," Yoder said. "I had gotten so close in years past so to be able to finally reach that milestone, especially in such a big way, was really special."

That one win wasn't enough for Yoder, however. He squared off with Paola's Maxwell Worden for the regional championship. Worden knocked off Yoder in the Frontier League title match two weeks earlier, but Yoder got the best of him this time in a 13-6 decision to win his first regional title.

It was a special moment, not only for Yoder, but also for his teammates, including Moore.

"Watching Brayden win his own regional title was probably my favorite part of the whole tournament," Moore said. "We've

been practice partners since third grade, so me and Brayden have gotten to be really close. Everyday I see the hard work and dedication he put into it. So, to see all that pay off at the perfect time was awesome.”

Last season, both Moore and Yoder were in opposite weight classes. Moore was 190 and Yoder was forced to wrestle at 215, while giving up a good amount of weight. The two have flipped this season and the change has been a perfect fit for the both of them.

“I think wrestling 215 last year really just taught me how to deal with adversity,” Yoder said. “Giving up the amount of weight that I did was definitely a challenge. Still, I prided myself on working hard despite my struggles, so to finally see my efforts pay off is a really gratifying feeling.”

As for Moore, he came into Saturday’s tournament as the No. 1 seed at 215 pounds and the favorite to win it. The Louisburg senior, and No. 2 ranked wrestler in the state handled his business with a 4-0 record and three pins.





***Louisburg senior Ashton Moore picks up an opponent for a takedown Saturday at the 4A regional tournament at Labette County.***

Moore (38-2) opened the tournament with a pin of Iola's Alston Nelson and did the same in the quarterfinals against Chanute's Karter Naff. He got a test in the semifinals against Columbus' Kash Smith.

It was a close match into the third period, but Moore was able to get the pin late in the match to move onto the finals. It was there where he met Prairie View's Parker Schwarz for the third time this season and Moore earned the 4-1 decision for the regional title.

"I was super grateful to win my first regional championship," Moore said. "Being at different regionals throughout high school, it's always been a big deal to me watching the guys in

the championship compete, so to be the one there winning it this year was a great feeling. Overall I feel like I wrestled solid on Saturday. I got to wrestle several guys I haven't seen before and I think that was a great opportunity to feel out some of the other competition."

McKitrick (32-15), who wrestled at 132 pounds, qualified for his first state tournament and overcame some early adversity to do it. The Louisburg senior was pinned in his first round match after taking an early lead.



***Louisburg's Mika McKitrick celebrates after qualifying for state at 132 pounds.***

He worked his way through the back side of the bracket as he rattled off four consecutive wins, including a pin of Osawatomie's Dayne Odgen in his blood round match. He then earned a technical fall over Girard's Gage Short in his third place match to avenge his lone loss of the day.

As for Clayton (24-15), he earned a second straight trip to



the state tourney. At 120 pounds, he went 2-2 on the day, but won his consolation semifinals match with a 7-2 decision over Parsons' Mario Zacarias to punch his ticket.

In the third place match, Clayton battled Osawatomie's Caden Peterson, but was pinned.



***Louisburg senior Canaan Clayton picks up the leg of an opponent Saturday at 120 pounds.***

Cotter was the lone underclassman to qualify for state as he took fourth at 106 pounds. Cotter (34-12) advanced to the semifinals, where he lost by pin to Paola's Sawyer Blue.

In his blood round match, Cotter earned a second period pin of Coffeyville's Jarvis Hall to qualify for state. In the third place match, he lost a 15-8 decision to Prairie View's Ryan Nickell.

"Levi has been a strong wrestler for us over the last couple seasons, and I'm so happy that he made it to state," Bovaird

said. "He's the kind of wrestler who got a later start in the sport, but he's making huge strides to catch up with the kids who've been wrestling a long time. He's so strong on his feet, and that nearly got him into the finals. Canaan has been such a great addition to the program. I've coached him since he started the sport with our club years ago, and to see him earn his way to become a 2-time state qualifier is an awesome thing.

"Mika had a heartbreaking loss in the quarterfinals to a Girard kid he'd beaten earlier in the season. That made his road to state a little more difficult, but along the way he got a revenge win against an Osawatomie wrestler and then a rematch in the consolation finals against the Girard kid. This time, he put aside all doubt with another revenge win."



***Louisburg sophomore Levi Cotter puts an opponent on his back Saturday at 106 pounds.***

Even with all the good news, several Wildcats saw their

seasons come to a close. Senior Jay McCaskill, junior Vance Hahn and freshman Parker Showalter all made it to the blood round, but finished one win short of state.

It was especially tough for McCaskill, who was trying to qualify for his third straight state tourney, but ended his Wildcat career in a tough 165-pound bracket.

“Jay got hurt with a serious ankle sprain in the league finals,” Bovaird said. “We were worried that it might have been something worse, but thankfully we got good news from his doctor. He worked his way back to as strong a place as he could get over the last two weeks, but that sprain was still something nagging at him.

“Jay has had a very successful career with the program – a 100-match winner, having two 30-win seasons, and a 2-time state qualifier. The other two years he didn’t qualify, he was in the blood round and so close. He’s been a workhorse for us, and a silent leader. Talk about a heartbreaking end to his career. I feel horrible for him, but I hope he knows that we are so proud and he is going to have a whole lot more success in his life beyond the mat.”

Now those five Wildcats will prepare for the state tournament this week that begins at 9 a.m. Friday morning in Salina. The double elimination tournament runs through Saturday.

“This tournament is always one of the most exciting events of the season, and I’m looking forward to seeing our wrestlers leave it all on the mat,” Bovaird said. “Every year, I remind myself to take in these moments and appreciate the hard work and dedication that goes into getting here. It’s a special experience, and this one, in particular, feels even more meaningful.”



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# DeWeese, Eslinger punch tickets to state tournament



***Louisburg freshman Brooklyn DeWeese works for a pin during the Class 4A East Regional tournament Friday in Paola. DeWeese and Leola Eslinger became the first Wildcat girls to qualify for state.***

PAOLA – For the first time in school history, the Louisburg girls wrestling program will have a representative at the state tournament – well, make that two.

Freshman Brooklyn DeWeese and sophomore Leola Eslinger punched their tickets to state Saturday at the Class 4A East Regional tournament at Paola High School as the top eight in each weight class earned a spot at the state tournament in Salina

on Feb. 28

It was a moment many in the Wildcat program won't soon forget.

"It was such an incredible moment – not just for Leola and Brooklyn, but also for the LHS wrestling program," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Having our first state qualifiers for the girls wrestling program is such a huge milestone, but it's an even bigger testament to all the hard work they've put in to the sport.

"Watching them reach this milestone in our program's history was very emotional, not just for me, but for all the coaches – Shawn Crossley, Heather Eslinger, and Andy Wright. All three of them have had a hand in these girls' growth before they ever got to high school. Leola and Brooklyn are raising the bar for our future girls wrestlers, and I have no doubt that they're not even close to being finished with what they intend to accomplish in their careers.

DeWeese was the first Wildcat to qualify after going 1-1 on the first day of action on Friday at 115 pounds. In her blood round match Saturday, DeWeese pinned Holton's Khloe Black in the second period to secure her spot.

In the battle to reach the fifth place match, DeWeese lost by pin to Wellsville's Brinlee Hartman. In the seventh place match, DeWeese then lost a tough 1-0 decision to Frontenac's Abby Albright to finish in eighth overall.

As for Eslinger, she battled her way through the 145 pound bracket. After losing her first match of the day Friday, she bounced back to end her day with a pin of Labette County's Katy Tyler to advance to the blood round Saturday.

In that match, Eslinger upset No. 4 seed Adalize Arevalo from Bishop Ward with a 12-4 major decision. After losing by pin to Paola's Shaelynn Smail, in the next consolation match, Eslinger ended her tournament with a win in a 11-6 decision

over No. 3 seed Brooklyn Collingsworth of Columbus to take seventh overall.

“Both girls wrestled their hearts out,” Bovaird said. “I can’t even begin to describe how much heart and determination they showed. Brooklyn (DeWeese) was aggressive and stayed composed in tough matches, really showcasing her growth this season as a freshman. Leola fought through some challenging moments and never backed down, showing resilience and grit. Both of them stepped up when it mattered most, and they absolutely earned their spots at state.”



***Louisburg sophomore Leola Eslinger pulls her opponent to the mat Friday in Paola. Eslinger finished 7th at the Class 4A East Regional and qualified for state.***

The Wildcats nearly had two others qualify for state as well. Freshman Brianna Caraway (130 pounds) and sophomore Maliya Collins (140) both lost their blood round matches.

Caraway went 1-1 on Friday, but in her blood round match Saturday, fell to Holton's Jacey Willard as she lost by pin. Collins also went 1-1 on Friday, but was pinned in her blood round match by Fort Scott's Kynlee Hampton.

"Brianna and Maliya had outstanding seasons," Bovaird said. "When you think about it, they're both relatively new to the high school level. Brianna is a freshman with a couple years experience at the youth level and Maliya is a sophomore with this being her first year on the mat. They both made huge strides with their technique, confidence, and mat awareness.

"Coming that close to state – wrestling in the "blood round" – is a tough accomplishment, but it also speaks to how competitive they have been all season long. They put in the work, battled hard every match, and showed that they're right there with the best. I have no doubt they'll use this as motivation for next season."





***Louisburg sophomore Maliya Collins works for a pin Friday during her regional match in Paola.***

It also marked the end for Wildcat wrestlers Allison Martin and Nora Smith, who also saw their season come to a close.

"All of our girls showed an incredible amount of growth over the season," Bovaird said. "Allison Martin finished her second season with a 15-16 record for us, and Nora Smith showed more courage and toughness than nearly anyone else on the team with her commitment. Our six girls who competed in the regional tournament couldn't have done any better representing our program, and that's a huge testament to their character, their dedication, and their parents' guidance along the way. Girls wrestling in Louisburg has been a long time coming, and I think with these girls' seasons, you can say it's finally landed."



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# Week 9 Athlete of the Week: Leola Eslinger



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week nine of the winter sports season, sponsored by Edward Jones-Craig Holtzen.

## LEOLA ESLINGER, SOPHOMORE, WRESTLING

Louisburg sophomore Leola Eslinger made history Saturday at the Class 4A East Regional Tournament at Paola High School. Eslinger joined freshman Brooklyn DeWeese as they became the first Wildcat girls to qualify for the state tournament. At 145 pounds, Eslinger went 3-2 on the day and finished seventh

overall as the top eight in each weight class qualify.

Eslinger defeated Bishop Ward's Adalize Arevalo, the No. 4 seed, in the blood round by major decision. She earned a convincing 11-6 victory in the seventh-place match against No. 3 seed Brooklyn Collingsworth of Columbus. Both Eslinger and DeWeese will represent Louisburg at the state tournament on Feb. 28 in Salina.

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

Previous winners:

Week 1: Gavin Lohse

Week 2: Colin Brown

Week 3: Jay McCaskill

Week 4: Brayden Yoder

Week 5: Andrew Jamison

Week 6: Ashlyn Kuhlman

Week 7: Ashton Moore

Week 8: Brooklyn DeWeese

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## Louisburg girls wrestling has historic day at league meet



***Louisburg freshman Brooklyn DeWeese finished second overall Saturday at the Frontier League Invitational in Ottawa.***

OTTAWA – It was an historic outing for the Louisburg girls wrestling team Saturday at the Frontier League Invitational.

In the program's short existence, the Wildcats recorded three medalists for the first time in school history and had their first wrestler make the league finals. It was a strong start to their postseason journey at Ottawa High School for a team that consists of only freshmen and sophomores.

"It was an emotional day with a lot of highs and lows," coach Heather Eslinger said. "First of all it was rough having my girls split into two gyms and therefore I wasn't able to watch all of their matches. Thank goodness (coaches) Bobby (Bovaird) and Shawn (Crossley) are so great.

"I was thrilled with our showing at league from our three girls who placed. It's great to see their confidence on the mat."



Freshman Brooklyn DeWeese had a finish to remember as she became the first Wildcat to earn a spot in the league finals and did so at 115 pounds.

DeWeese (29-8) advanced to the semifinals where she pinned Bonner Springs' Kyle Enriquez in the second period. In the finals, DeWeese faced off with the No. 3 ranked wrestler in the state – Tonganoxie's Stella Bradley – and lost by pin the second period.



***Louisburg freshman Brianna Caraway took third at 130 pounds Saturday at the league meet in Ottawa.***

Another freshman, Brianna Caraway, also found her way to the medal stand as she put together a 3-1 day and finished third at 130 pounds.

Caraway (14-6) opened with a pin of Ottawa's Kylea Brewing, but lost in the semifinals when she was pinned by Spring Hill's Kendall Anderson.

On the back side of the bracket, Caraway pinned Baldwin's Keziah Moses in the consolation semifinals and then pinned Paola's Kylie Parke in the third place match.

Sophomore Maliya Collins earned her first league medal as she took fourth at 140 pounds. She finished the day with a 2-2 record.

Collins (22-13) earned a spot in the third place match with an overtime victory over Spring Hill's Morgan Hinton in the consolation semifinals. In that third place match, Collins fell by pin to Paola's Layla Anthony.



***Louisburg sophomore Maliya Collins earned a fourth place medal Saturday at the league meet in Ottawa.***

"Brooklyn is making quite a mark her freshman year and I'm excited to see what regionals holds for her," Eslinger said. "Brianna has had a rough start to the season missing a lot of practices and I'm happy that she didn't let that hold her back at league."

Louisburg also suffered some injuries in the tournament as freshman Bella Pickman, Emma Duckworth and Allison Martin all had to exit the tournament early. Pickman and Duckworth saw their seasons come to a close.

Martin ended up finishing sixth at 135 pounds, while sophomore Leola Eslinger was fifth at 145 pounds.

“We had a lot of obstacles at league,” coach Eslinger said. “We had some injuries that ended the season for Emma and Bella. Emma suffered a concussion from an illegal mat return and Bella had a shoulder injury aggravated at league and was decided it was best to end her season rather than injure herself in a way that takes her out next season.

“Allison and Leola both struggled with some issues at league and didn’t have the showing I had hoped for, however I’m confident this week before regionals will be a time for rest and rejuvenation.”

This postseason does ramp up for the Wildcats on Friday as they take part in the 2-day regional tournament at Paola High School. Action begins at 1 p.m. and will continue into Saturday.

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**Wildcats finish third at  
Frontier League tourney;  
medal 9 overall**





***Louisburg senior Ashton Moore won the 215-pound Frontier League title Saturday in Ottawa.***

OTTAWA – The Louisburg boys wrestling team showed why it is one of the top teams in the Frontier League last Saturday in Ottawa.

The Wildcats finished third out of eight teams at the Frontier League Invitational with 163 points. Paola won the league title with 232 points and Tonganoxie was second with 188.5.

Louisburg also had nine league medalists and had five wrestlers in the finals. Senior Ashton Moore won an individual league crown at 215 pounds as the Wildcats put together one of their better league performances in recent memory.

“The league continues to be tough-as-nails, and with teams like Tonganoxie, Paola and Spring Hill, it’s going continue to be tough every year,” Bovaird said. “There was a while when we were really pushing Tonganoxie for second place. Our finals round didn’t quite work out how we wanted to it be, but I know



we had them nervous.

“There were some years when we had the dual tournament for league, and we ended up with lots of champs and runners-up. Since we moved back to the individual tournament format, this is the most finalists we’ve had since 1998. Putting that many in the finals and bringing home so many medals feels pretty good. This is the best we’ve done in the last eight years, which was the last year we had a dual tournament format.”

Moore (34-2) won his fifth tournament title in a month as he took care of business in the 215-pound bracket. The Louisburg senior, and the No. 2 wrestler in Class 4A, won all three of his matches.

He opened with a pin of Tonganoxie’s Jaxon Dominic, and in the semifinals, he pinned Spring Hill’s Logan Alexander in the third period. In the finals, Moore won by medical forfeit over Ottawa’s Seth Ferguson.

Sophomore Levi Cotter (106 pounds), senior Mika McKitrick (132), senior Jay McCaskill (165), junior Vance Hahn (175) and senior Brayden Yoder also made the league finals, but each finished second.

Cotter (32-10) finished with a 2-1 record including a pair of pins, but squared off with Paola’s Sawyer Blue, who is ranked No. 6 in the state and lost by a 16-5 major decision.



***Louisburg junior Vance Hahn finished second at 175 pounds Saturday at the Frontier League Invitational.***

McKitrick (29-15) was 1-1 on the day, including a pin of Spring Hill's Braden Cannally in the semis, but was pinned by Tonganoxie's Silas McCloy in the finals.

McCaskill (27-8) opened the day with a pair of dominant performances with two wins by technical fall and set up match with Baldwin's Max Harvey in the finals. The Louisburg senior fell 14-3 to take second overall.

As for Hahn (26-16), he also opened the tournament with a tech fall win and then won a 6-4 decision over Paola's Elijah Younger in the semis. Hahn would get pinned in the finals by Baldwin's Keldyn Cox.

Yoder (31-10) received a bye in the quarterfinals, but got a pin of Baldwin's Hank Beard in the semis. He squared off with Paola's Maxwell Worden in the finals, but was pinned in the third period.

Louisburg senior Canaan Clayton medaled third for the Wildcats at 120 pounds, while sophomore Spencer Mattison (144) and senior Miles Meek (285) finished fourth overall.

Clayton (23-13) finished the day 1-2, but won his final match with a pin over Ottawa's Mason Ingram to earn the third place medal.

Mattison (15-22) ended with a 2-2 day that included a pair of pins. He fell to Spring Hill's Chase Wilson in the third place match by a 13-2 major decision.

Meek (16-22) went 1-3 in the heavyweight division, including a pin of Ottawa's Will McCombs in his first match of the day.



***Louisburg sophomore Spencer Mattison medaled fourth at 144 pounds Saturday at the Frontier League Invitational.***

"It seems like we've struggled to be at full strength as a team for the league tournament the last few years," Bovaird said. "We had 2-3 guys out last year with injuries and

illness, and the previous years we just couldn't rise up and compete how I wanted us to do.

"This year, it was a different story. Guys like Levi, Mika and Vance making the finals was a great step. Then we had Jay, Brayden and Ashton perform pretty well, too, making the finals in their weights. On the back side of the brackets, Canaan, Spencer, and Miles all stepped up their game."

Louisburg will now prepare for its quest to earn a state tournament bid. The Wildcats have this week off before traveling to Labette County on Feb. 22 for the Class 4A regional tournament.

The top four finishers in each weight class will secure a spot at state.

"Getting some time off will be nice," Bovaird said. "The guys need to heal up and recover a little, and there are lots of little things we need to work on refining. Jay suffered a nasty sprain in his lower leg, but he should be good to go by regionals. Recovery time is always a nice thing – we just need to make sure we're not getting complacent with how we've been doing. If we go into regionals with the right mindset, we can really achieve some phenomenal things as a team."

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## **Week 8 Athlete of the Week: Brooklyn DeWeese**





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

## **BROOKLYN DEWEESE, FRESHMAN, WRESTLING**

Louisburg freshman Brooklyn DeWeese has put together a memorable season so far for the Wildcat girls wrestling team. Last Saturday at Ottawa, DeWeese became the first girls wrestler to earn a spot in the Frontier League finals and she finished second overall at 115 pounds.

DeWeese got a pin of Bonner Springs' Kyle Enriquez in the semifinals. She then faced the Class 4A No. 3 ranked wrestler in Tonganoxie's Stella Bradley in the championship and lost by pin. On the season, DeWeese has a 29-8 record with 23 of those coming by pin.

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday

morning during the winter season and the winner is selected by Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.

Previous winners:

Week 1: Gavin Lohse

Week 2: Colin Brown

Week 3: Jay McCaskill

Week 4: Brayden Yoder

Week 5: Andrew Jamison

Week 6: Ashlyn Kuhlman

Week 7: Ashton Moore



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# Wildcats take third, medal five at Baldwin Invite



***The Louisburg wrestling team finished third Saturday at the Baldwin Invitational and medaled five overall.***

BALDWIN CITY – In what is one of the toughest tournaments on its schedule, the Louisburg boys wrestling team found a lot of success Saturday at the Baldwin Invitational Tournament.

Not only did the Wildcats medal five, but found themselves in the top three of the team standings. Louisburg finished third overall with 152 points. Tonganoxie won the 19-team tournament with 231 points and Santa Fe Trail was second with 159.

“Once again, the Baldwin Invitational didn’t disappoint with how tough a tournament it ended up being,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “The thing I love about this tournament is



the fact that we get to see so many teams we don't typically see during the regular season – Wamego, Goodland, Buhler, and Rock Creek to name a few. We had a great run on the back side of the bracket, and in the finals we were able to hold off a very strong Holton team to keep us in third place.

“We had Logan Henry out with a knee injury, and he's a returning state qualifier. Also, Canaan Clayton hurt his shoulder in his first match, which was a big blow for us. He still battled in that match and went out for his next match, but you could tell he was hurting. He's such a tough kid, though. Never complains.”

Louisburg put two wrestlers in the championship round in seniors Ashton Moore and Jay McCaskill. Moore went on to win his 215-pound bracket, while McCaskill was second at 165 pounds.



***Louisburg senior Ashton Moore won the 215-pound bracket to improve his record to 28-2 on the season.***



Moore finished 3-0 on the day with a pin over Tonganoxie's Jaxon Dominic in the quarterfinals and then earned a 12-1 major decision over Baldwin's Brenden O'Connor in the semis.

His biggest test came in the finals in a battle of state-ranked wrestlers. Moore, who is ranked No. 2 in Class 4A, squared off with No. 3 Taven Dick of Holton.

Moore found himself in a hole early as he was down 4-0, but battled back to eventually get a 10-6 decision and won his fourth tournament title in a month. He also improved his record to 28-2 on the season.

"That sort of mental toughness is something that everyone can benefit from watching," Bovaird said of Moore. "Ashton kept his head and didn't panic. He was focused and ready to score points, which is what we needed from him."

McCaskill earned a spot in the championship round with a quarterfinal pin of Santa Fe Trail's Dale Kirby and then pinned Chance Gray of Perry-Lecompton in the second period of the semifinals.



*Louisburg senior Jay McCaskill earned win No. 100 Saturday in*

### ***the semifinals of the Baldwin Invitational.***

That victory earned McCaskill career win No. 100 in what was a memorable moment for the Louisburg senior. He battled in his championship match, but lost a 7-1 decision to Buhler's Luke Kerns.

"The past two years especially, Jay has been laser-focused, both at practice and at competitions," Bovaird said. "He's really stepped up as a leader, too. He'll work with all levels of kids at practice, and he's more vocal this year than before. He's also a leader by example and he's tough as can be.

"Jay came up against a tough kid from Buhler in the finals. He really wrestled well, but his opponent was pretty slick and solid with his positioning, which helped him take advantage of any mistake Jay might have made."

Sophomore Levi Cotter also had a solid day at 106 pounds for the Wildcats as he took third with a 3-1 record on the day. His lone loss came in the semifinals in a 12-10 decision to Holton's Tyson Carlson.

Cotter responded to win two in the consolation bracket, including a technical fall over Labette County's Gavin Myers to take third place.



***Louisburg freshman Parker Showalter medaled fourth at 113 pounds Saturday in Baldwin.***

Freshman Parker Showalter (113 pounds) and senior Brayden Yoder (190) both left Baldwin with medals as they finished fourth overall.

Yoder battled in a tough 190-pound weight class. He opened with two wins before falling to the eventual champion, Holton's Kyler Jackson, in the semifinals in an 8-3 decision.

He advanced to the third place match against Goodland's Logan Franz, where he lost by pin. Yoder finished his day with a 3-2 record.

At 113 pounds, Showalter recorded his first varsity medal of the season after earning a spot in the third place match, but fell to Eudora's Gabe Campbell in a 7-3 decision.



Seniors Will Showalter (125) and Mika McKitrick (132) each finished in fifth place and sophomore Spencer Mattison (144) was sixth. Sophomore Bryce Thompson (157) and junior Vance Hahn (175) took seventh overall.

Louisburg is back in action Saturday as the Wildcats travel to Ottawa for the Frontier League Invitational.