

# 2021 Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Year nominees



For the past five years, Louisburg Sports Zone has given out Athlete of the Week awards during each of the three sports seasons. I do it to recognize special athletic achievements and to highlight the athletes.

For the fourth straight 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 later this month.

Below are the nominees for this year’s award in alphabetical order by last name. Congrats to all those who were nominated and best of luck!

## **ATHLETES OF THE YEAR NOMINEES**

### **FEMALE**



## **Reese Johnson – Junior – Cross Country, Soccer**

Junior Reese Johnson made history in a couple different sports for Louisburg this past season.

In the fall, Johnson played a big role on the girls cross country team. The Lady Cats finished third in Class 4A, as that was the first time a team had placed at state in girls cross country. Johnson also medaled 15th individually and was one of three Lady Cats to earn state medals that day.

In the spring, Johnson was one of the leaders on the girls soccer team that advanced to the Class 4-1A state final four this past season. Johnson earned second team All-Frontier League honors after she finished the season with seven goals and nine assists as the Wildcats finished fourth at state.



## **Alyse Moore – Senior – Volleyball, Basketball, Track**

Alyse Moore ended her senior season as one of the most accomplished athletes in Louisburg High School history. Moore is the first female athlete in school history to compete at the state level in four different sports, including both softball and track in the same season in 2019.

In the spring, Moore earned her second straight track state medal in the javelin as she finished fourth in the Class 4A meet. Earlier in the year, Moore broke a 20-year-old school record with a throw of 149 feet.

Moore was also a starter on the girls basketball team and helped the Lady Cats to their best finish in school history. Moore and the Lady Cats advanced to state for the first time in 47 years and took third overall. Individually, Moore eclipsed the 500-career rebound mark and was an honorable



mention all-league player. She led the team in rebounds with 8.6 boards a game and also averaged 7.3 points and 1.7 steals.

On the volleyball court, Moore started as an outside hitter for the Lady Cats and was second on the team with 174 kills and 195 digs.



## **Delaney Wright – Junior – Basketball, Track**

Delaney Wright ended the 2020-21 school year with a bang as she became the school's first athlete to win three state championships in track in one season.

At the Class 4A state meet in Wichita last month, Wright won state titles in the long jump, 400-meter dash and 200-meter dash. She broke her own 200 and 400 school records to reach those accomplishments. On the season, Wright set new school

records in each of those events.

Wright was also a key player on the girls basketball team and helped the Lady Cats to their best finish in school history. Wright and the Lady Cats advanced to state for the first time in 47 years and took third overall at the Class 4A state tournament. Wright was one of the team's best defensive players as she averaged two deflections and a steal per game. She was also assigned to the team's best player.

## MALE



## Weston Guetterman – Senior – Football, Basketball

Weston Guetterman played big roles for both the Wildcat football and basketball teams this past season.

On the gridiron, Guetterman was the starting quarterback for



Louisburg, which finished 4-3 and tied for third in the Frontier League standings. Guetterman earned honorable mention All-League honors on defense for his play in the secondary. He finished the year with 32 tackles, two interceptions, three tackles for a loss and seven batted balls. He also finished with 548 yards rushing and six touchdowns.

Guetterman was one of the team leaders on the boys basketball team that advanced to its first state championship in school history and took second at the Class 4A state tournament. He was a second-team All-Frontier League selection from the point guard spot and averaged 12.5 points, 4.3 rebounds, 3.7 assists and 2.2 steals a game. He was also an all-state selection by the Topeka Capital-Journal, Wichita Eagle and Sports in Kansas.



## **Cade Holtzen – Senior – Cross Country, Wrestling, Track**

Cade Holtzen was a three-sport athlete this past season for Louisburg and became the first male athlete (that is known) to participate in state competitions in all three sports, in the same season.

Holtzen helped the Wildcat cross country team to qualify for state for the first time in school history as they finished third at regionals. At state, Holtzen took 56th overall in 18 minutes and 46 seconds.

On the wrestling mat, Holtzen had a year to remember as he finished his career with a 155-19 record and a third-place state finish at 132 pounds. He was a four-time state qualifier for the Wildcats and a three-time state placer. Holtzen served as the team captain this past season and currently holds eight program records, including most season victories and most career wins. He was also chosen to participate in the 2021 Metro Classic.

In the spring, Holtzen earned his second state medal of the year as he helped the 4×800-meter relay team to a third place finish. He also helped the Wildcats to their second team Class 4A state track championship in school history.



## **Kolby Kattau – Junior – Football, Baseball**

Kolby Kattau was a two-sport athlete this past season and had a good year for both the football and baseball program.

In the spring, Kattau helped the Wildcats to their first regional championship game since 2009 as he played both first base and pitcher. Kattau finished the year with a .444 average and racked up 32 hits for the Wildcats to go along with a .560 on-base percentage. He finished with five doubles, two triples, 16 RBIs, scored 26 runs and stole nine bases. He was a first team All-Frontier League selection and was an honorable mention all-state selection by the KBCA.

On the football field, Kattau played on both sides of the ball for a team that finished with a 4-3 record and tied for third in the Frontier League. He finished with two touchdowns from



the running back spot and had 41 tackles at linebacker.



## **Alec Younggren – Senior – Football, Wrestling**

Alec Younggren was a two-sport athlete for Louisburg as he shined on the football field and on the wrestling mat.

Younggren, who missed part of the football season with an injury, still played well-enough on the offensive and defensive lines to earn All-Frontier League honors on both sides of the ball. Younggren was named as a first-team offensive lineman and an honorable mention lineman on defense.

He was a key fixture on the Wildcat offensive line that amassed more than 2,400 yards of total offense and 20 touchdowns. He also had 23 tackles on defense. Younggren was also an all-state honorable mention selection.

The Louisburg senior had an historic season in wrestling as he advanced to the 220-pound Class 4A championship match, where he finished runner-up. He finished the year with a 37-1 record and had Louisburg's highest state finish since 2012.



## **Braden Yows – Junior – Soccer**

Louisburg junior Braden Yows was vital part of the Wildcats' best finish in school history this past season. Yows helped the Wildcats to a third place finish in the Class 4-1A state tournament.

Yows was a first-team All-Frontier League and all-state selection from his midfield spot. He broke a program record with 21 assists and also finished with seven goals on the year.

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# Six Wildcats named to all-league wrestling team



In a normal season, the wrestling all-league selections would be handled in a league tournament and not by vote.

However with COVID-19 precautions, the Frontier League tournament was cancelled this season, but the league coaches still wanted to honor their wrestlers in some way.

The coaches got together for a vote and put together the All-Frontier League wrestling team. For Louisburg, the Wildcats earned five spots on the boys side, and an honorable mention selection on the girls squad.

Cade Holtzen (132 pounds), Aiden Barker (182) and Alec Younggren (220) were named first team all-league. Ryan Owens (120) and Kaven Bartlett (126) were selected to the third and honorable mention team, respectively.

On the girls side, junior Bailey Hallas was named as an honorable mention at 109 pounds.

"Historically, our 'all-league' selections have been determined by the league tournament," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "It was objective and results-based. This year was a little different – it was based on season performance and honors determined by coaches during a Zoom meeting after



the season. Luckily, wrestling coaches are experienced with seeding meetings for regular tournaments and we're able to look at objective criteria to determine seeds: head-to-head, record against common opponents, record against strong competition, tournament finishes, and post-season performance. When we met to talk about our selections, there was very little debate because the results would speak for themselves."

Younggren had an historic season for the Wildcats, one that took him to the 220-pound state championship match, where he ultimately finished second with a 37-1 record. It was Louisburg's highest placing at state since 2012.

After the season Younggren, along with Holtzen, were both selected to represent Kansas in the Metro Classic last month.



***Louisburg senior Alec Younggren was an all-league first team selection at 220 pounds after a state runner-up finish this***

**year.**

"It's not often that a kid like Alec moves into a new school for his senior year," Bovaird said. "The great thing about Alec is that he had no trouble becoming a part of the Wildcat wrestling family. It helped with him being a football player, as well as with him knowing Cade and Ryan from the Olathe Southside youth wrestling program, but with the rest of the team, it quickly seemed as though Alec had always been a part of the program. He's one of the strongest kids I've stepped on the mat with, and he knows the sport. He's done the international styles of wrestling (freestyle and greco-roman), and he's got an agility that you don't often find with kids in that weight.

"He's a great leader on the mat with his competitiveness and his physicality. In the short time he was a part of our program, he had a phenomenal influence on his teammates. I felt he deserved to be a state champion, and I wish that match had done differently. At the end of the day, though, I know he gave it everything, and he's got nothing to be ashamed of."

As for Holtzen, the Louisburg senior finished third at state and ended his season with a 38-2 record. He also became just third wrestler in school history to win three state medals and just the eighth wrestler to become a 4-time state qualifier.

He's got school records for most in a career (wins, takedowns, match points, nearfall-2, nearfall-3, and team points) and most in a season (wins and nearfall-2), and he's 17th in the entire state of Kansas for most career team points.



***Senior Cade Holtzen was named to the All-Frontier League first team at 132 pounds after this third place finish at state.***

“Cade’s become a major fixture in the pages of Louisburg wrestling history, and I’m very proud to have had the chance to be a part of his time here at LHS,” Bovaird said. “He’s a two-year team captain, and last season he was honored by the National Wrestling Coaches Association and the US Marine Corps as a Character and Leadership All-American.

“This season, Cade set the bar pretty high when it came to what’s expected for hard work. He stayed late after practice, and he came in early before school to get extra time on the mat, along with Alec Younggren. He’s been a role model for his teammates, whether it’s with our mindset training, the skills on the mat, or the mentoring of younger kids.”

Barker, a junior, had a big season for the Wildcats and was one win away from making the state tournament, or the final eight in his 182-pound weight class. He ended his season with 27-10 record.





***Junior Aiden Barker was named a first team All-Frontier League wrestler at 182 pounds.***

“Aiden has progressed so much since I first got to work with him,” Bovaird said. “He began working with the Wildcat Wrestling Club in middle school, and I’ve had the pleasure of seeing him mature and develop in the sport ever since. He’s dedicated himself to off-season wrestling and weight-lifting, and he is starting to reap the benefits.

“He’s become a great team leader and is getting more and more confident with his abilities. Add on top of that, he’s got a crazy sense of toughness that’s tough to match. He spent the whole season getting into it with Alec every day at practice. That’s a 40-pound difference, and Alec was never the kind of partner to take things easy.”

Owens, who was a state placer as a junior, was also a win away from making it to the final eight at state. The 120-pound

senior ended his season with a 25-8 record and a sixth-place finish at the sub-state tournament.

“There’s something about Ryan that has always made his contributions to the program immeasurable,” Bovaird said. “He’s tough as nails, he’s open to new approaches to making his techniques work, and he’s got a sense of maturity that is inspiring to his teammates. He made it to state as a sophomore giving up nearly 7-8 pounds every match, and as a junior he was a state placer.



***Louisburg senior Ryan Owens was selected to the All-Frontier League third team at 120 pounds.***

“While I really wish his season had ended differently, I also understand that 120 is one of the toughest and deepest weights year-after-year. On any given day, that sub-state bracket could have been played out differently. Ryan went out and battled in his matches, and that’s one of his greatest characteristics. He sets a goal and pursues it with an uncanny



focus and dedication.”

Bartlett competed in one of the toughest weight classes in the state – 126 pounds. It was that way in the league as well, but the Louisburg sophomore still earned honorable mention honors after a 21-15 season.

“This year especially, Kaven has been the epitome of toughness and hard work,” Bovaird said. “Combine those two traits with his great wrestling abilities, and you’ve got a kid who’s going to win a lot of matches. This year he certified at 120 pounds., but he made the sacrifice to compete at 132 to start off the year.



***Louisburg sophomore Kaven Bartlett was named honorable mention all-league at 126 pounds.***

“After Cade moved up to 132, he was a little closer to his natural weight. Even though he gave up that weight in most of his matches, he went out there and wrestled his hardest. Both matches he lost at sub-state were 1-0. It’s disappointing for



him that he didn't go further, but at the same time, he's right on the verge of turning the corner. The next two years will be special seasons for him."

Hallas made history on the girls side as she was the first female wrestler in Louisburg history to take part in the postseason tournament and made it to regionals this year.

"Bailey made a huge commitment to try out wrestling, and I'm so proud of her for taking those steps," Bovaird said. "She became our first ever girl to compete in the post-season, and she earned her way to the regional tournament this year. She's an athletic young lady with a great sense of competitiveness. I'm definitely excited to see what she can do next season, as well as how she will help the program grow by bringing in more girls."

## **BAILEY HALLAS**

**JUNIOR**  
**109 LBS.**

Honorable Mention All-League  
2021 KSHSAA 4A Regional Qualifier



The awards weren't done there as the Wildcat team earned was named to the KWCA All-Academic first team.

Barker, Brandon Doles, Holtzen and Luke Kelly were named to the individual all-academic first team, while Jarrett Hoyle and Hallas were selected as honorable mentions.

## **ALL-FRONTIER LEAGUE WRESTLING**

### **106 pounds**

First team: Brock Coleman, Tonganoxie, sophomore

Second team: Zack Cunningham, Ottawa, junior

Third team: Ayedin Johnson, Baldwin, freshman

HM: Ja'Diz Simmons, Piper, junior

### **113 pounds**

First team: Braeden Moore, Tonganoxie, freshman

Second team: Ethan Cook, Bonner Springs, freshman

Third team: Macoy Johnson, Paola, sophomore

HM: Dalton Dempsey, Baldwin, freshman

### **120 pounds**

First team: Clayton Younger, Paola, freshman

Second team: Trevor Andrew, Bonner Springs, senior

Third team: Ryan Owens, Louisburg, senior

HM: Nakos Benton, Baldwin, junior

### **126 pounds**

First team: Grayson Sonntag, Tonganoxie, junior

Second team: Parker Guge, Ottawa, freshman

Third team: Ryan Pankov, Paola, sophomore

HM: Kaven Bartlett, Louisburg, sophomore

### **132 pounds**

First team: Cade Holtzen, Louisburg, senior

Second team: Noah Bailey, Tonganoxie, freshman

Third team: Charlie Seller, Paola, sophomore

HM: Liam Sutton, Ottawa, senior

### **138 pounds**

First team: Cruz Lara, Bonner Springs, senior

Second team: Cael Lynch, Eudora, senior

Third team: Collin Creach, Ottawa, junior

HM: Kelson McAllister, Spring Hill, junior

### **145 pounds**

First team: Cassius Vanderpool, Bonner Springs, senior

Second team: Derek Duffett, Tonganoxie, senior

Third team: Holden Andrews, Eudora, senior

HM: Josh Broyles, Baldwin, senior

### **152 pounds**

First team: Gabriel Bailey, Tonganoxie, junior

Second team: Will Schreiner, Eudora, senior

Third team: Shane Daniels, Bonner Springs, junior

HM: Joel Brown, Ottawa, sophomore

### **160 pounds**

First team: Dayton Fraser, Eudora, junior

Second team: Colton Brusven, Tonganoxie, freshman



Third team: Carson Gleghorn, Paola, senior

HM: Jacob Waller, Bonner Springs, senior

### **170 pounds**

First team: Kael Lane, Ottawa, senior

Second team: Dakota Whitaker, Eudora, senior

Third team: Jack Harvey, Baldwin, freshman

HM: Ben Timpe, Paola, senior

### **182 pounds**

First team: Aiden Barker, Louisburg, junior

Second team: Wyatt Sink, Ottawa, junior

Third team: Hunter Benedict, Tonganoxie, sophomore

HM: Nate Criqui, Eudora, senior

### **195 pounds**

First team: Branden Martin, Tonganoxie, senior

Second team: Draven Pipken, Spring Hill, sophomore

Third team: Jared Ferguson, Ottawa, junior

HM: Dakota Mortell, Bonner Springs, junior

### **220 pounds**

First team: Alec Younggren, Louisburg, senior

Second team: Toby Thomas, Baldwin, senior

Third team: Andrew Campbell, Spring Hill, junior

HM: Devon Moncrief, Eudora, senior

## **285 pounds**

First team: Tony Caballero, Bonner Springs, junior

Second team: Denver Gardner, Spring Hill, senior

Third team: Aaron Clevenger, Ottawa, junior

HM: Jason Newton, Paola, sophomore

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# **Holtzen, Younggren return home as state medalists**



***Louisburg senior Cade Holtzen tries to hold Andale's AJ Furnish to the mat during the third-place match Saturday in Salina.***

SALINA – Cade Holtzen and Alec Younggren didn't get to leave Salina on Saturday with what they were hoping to earn.

Only a select few get to leave with the title of "state champion," and both Louisburg seniors were close to reaching their goal. Despite that, both wrestlers helped the Wildcat team to their best state finish in nearly 11 years.

Younggren reached the championship match, only to finish second at 220 pounds, while Holtzen rallied back to medal third at 132 during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling

Championships at the Tony's Pizza Events Center. The two wrestlers combined to score 30 points, which put them 14th in the team standings.

Louisburg hadn't finished that high since 2010, when Austin Hood won his first of three state titles and his brother Bryce, took second. The Wildcats were 10th that year.

The Wildcats nearly had their first state champion since 2012 when Younggren reached the 220 pound finals and he was more than ready to finish out his perfect season.

To start the tournament, Younggren opened with an 8-2 decision against Goodland's Dexter Dautel in the quarterfinals. Then in the semis, he pinned Clay Center's Keegan McDonald in the third period to earn a spot in his first state championship match.

Then came the battle of unbeatens when Younggren took his perfect record against No. 1 ranked Cayden Winter of Andale.

Winter got out to a quick start and led Younggren 5-1 going into the third period. The Louisburg senior got an escape to start the third period, but Winter responded with a takedown to make it 7-2.

Younggren followed with another escape and a takedown to cut it to 7-5. He just couldn't the back points he was looking for as Winter scored a reversal in the final seconds and handed Younggren his first loss in a 9-5 decision.

"I felt like I wrestled to the best of my ability and I gave my all and that's all I could do," Younggren said. "It may not be the outcome I wanted, but at the end of the day I know I gave my all that's I can do.

"I think my finals match the hardest part for me. Wrestling Winter's speed was something I haven't seen the whole year and being down early in the match didn't help. Going into the



third period I just could make up the ground I had lost.”



***Alec Younggren reacts to advancing to his first state championship match Saturday at the state tournament in Salina.***

Younggren finished his season with a 37-1 record and a second place medal, which is the school's highest individual placer since 2012.

“All season long, Alec has been a beast on the mat for us,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “He was a great addition to the program this year, and he fell right in with the team as though he'd been a part of it all four years. From the very beginning, he bought into the Wildcat Wrestling philosophy and he had an immediate impact on his teammates. Over the years, I've worked with a lot of strong athletes, but I think pound-for-pound, Alec has to be one of the strongest kids I've ever worked with. It doesn't matter the position –

top, bottom, or neutral, he's immovable. When he wants to move, he's like a charging bull and there's not much you can do to stop him.

"I'm especially proud of his work ethic and competitiveness, and I know those qualities definitely influenced the other wrestlers. Also, he's got a great wrestling knowledge that includes a style that matches very well with my own and a style influenced by freestyle and greco-roman wrestling. I know how much he wanted to win that state title this year, and the thing that I praised about him is the fact that he overcame so much this year. There was the broken foot, the fact that he was a new kid in a new school his senior year, the uncertainties of Covid, and the move to a new classification. He was untouchable this season, though. All the way to the state tournament, he'd only seen the third period one time. He'd put so much work into getting that state title, and it breaks my heart that he came up so close of that goal."



***Alec Younggren works to take down Clay Center's Keegan McDonald during the 220-pound semifinal match.***

Holtzen's tough moment came in the semifinals as he was vying for his first state championship appearance. He opened the tournament with a 4-2 decision over Pratt's Kaiser Pelland to move on to the semifinals to square off with Mulvane's Chadwick Stahl.

The match had a lot of action as a scramble seemed to Stahl on his back and Holtzen with a pin. Instead, Stahl fought it off and another scramble put Holtzen on his back and he wasn't able to get out of it.

Stahl pinned Holtzen in 1 minute and 18 seconds and Holtzen was forced to try for the third place medal instead.

"Oh I definitely know that I had the pin," Holtzen said. "I was looking at his shoulders and he was flat. But sometimes



the ref doesn't call the call and he got a little lucky and flipped me and then I just couldn't get out of it. I feel like I was 100 percent the best wrestler in that bracket, so it's tough knowing I should've been holding that bracket on top of the podium."



***Cade Holtzen looked like he had a pin of Mulvane's Chadwick Stahl during the 132-pound semifinal match on Saturday.***

Holtzen, who is the program's leader in wins, responded to record two more to his end career on a winning note.

The Louisburg senior won a 2-0 decision over Scott City's Zach Rohrbough and then followed it up with a convincing 7-2 decision over Andale's AJ Furnish. Furnish was the No. 1 ranked wrestler in the weight class going into the tournament.

After the match, Holtzen got a hug from his coach after realizing his wrestling career was over.

“There were a lot of tears shed, but not as many as I would’ve thought,” Holtzen said. “I think that’s just because of all that I fought through and accomplished this season that it would be a shame to be anything but proud of the result. Of course I’m sad that it’s over, but I have nothing but love and gratitude to the sport that has given me so much.”

Holtzen finished his season with a 38-2 record and a third place state medal, which is a career-best. He also become a 3-time state medalist in the process as he was wrestling with a heavy heart after his grandfather, C.D., passed away earlier that week.



***Cade Holtzen shares a hug with head coach Bobby Bovaird following his final state match Saturday in Salina. Holtzen finished his season with a 38-2 record.***

"Ten years ago when I first came to Louisburg, Cade was one of the first wrestlers I got to meet," Bovaird said. "For years, I'd been looking forward to seeing this skinny second grader grow up and join our high school program, and from the very beginning of his high school career, I knew he'd leave a huge footprint on our program. In addition to the past four years of LHS wrestling, I've worked with him throughout the years as a youth and middle school wrestling coach, his high school English teacher, and his gifted teacher. I've formed a bond with him that has taught me more about wrestling, coaching, and teaching than I think he'll ever realize. I'm the coach I am today due in part to my relationship with him.

"As he finishes up his high school career, I can say that I am nothing but proud of him and grateful for the opportunity to coach him. He had a tough tournament, coming so close to getting that state title. There's a series of photos that were taken during his semifinals match where you can clearly see that he had his opponent pinned, but that's the way it goes. He suffered a huge setback, and, as I told him after his third place match, 99 percent of people who come that close to a goal would throw up their hands and say, "Why bother?" Not Cade. I asked him what he chose to do instead of that, and he said he finished the job. He battled back and overcame all the disappointment and emotions by knocking off two very strong wrestlers. By doing that, he became the 1 percent. I told him that I was so proud of him, but more importantly, his grandfather is looking down, even more proud. With that, we both cried, but I know that Cade has found some peace from it."

It was an emotional ending to what had been a successful season for the Wildcats, one that sees the departure of three seniors who made big impacts on the program in Holtzen,



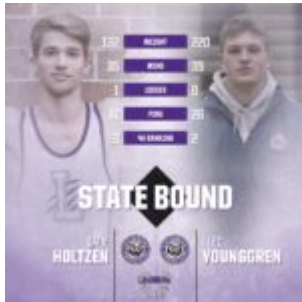
Younggren and Ryan Owens.

"With these seniors, along with Ryan Owens, they've brought five state medals to our program, and Alec brought a state medal from his previous school," Bovaird said. "They earned 10 trips to the state tournament in their careers. It was pretty special at state this weekend when a wrestler from another league school came up to me, shook my hand, and said, 'Coach, congratulations on this season. You're really building something special there in Louisburg.' This kid had no reason to say that to me, nothing to gain. It got me thinking about things. It's not that I'm building something myself; it's all the youth coaches who've had an impact on these kids, the middle school coaches, the assistant coaches, the parents, the teammates, the alumni, and the families.

"Cade and Alec represent a diverse scope of influence that has led the Louisburg Wrestling program to where it is today – and where it's going in the future. Cade and Ryan are grassroots, home-grown products of Louisburg, and with Alec, it's an example of a stellar athlete and his family having trust in our program to continue building on what he'd already accomplished. Cade and Ryan wouldn't have stayed here if they didn't have faith in the program, and Alec wouldn't have come here if he and his family hadn't liked the whole program. Seeing these seniors graduate is definitely bittersweet. They leave huge shoes to fill, but at the same time, I know that each of them will be incredibly successful in anything they choose to do in life."

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# Drive for state titles fuel Holtzen, Younggren



With a combined 70-1 record, Louisburg seniors Cade Holtzen and Alec Younggren are ready to take Salina by storm.

Today is the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships that will be held at the Tony's Pizza Event Center in Salina. It is the place where wrestling dreams are made.

It is where champions are crowned, but it is also a place where tears are shed. The best of the best will square off today as the top eight wrestlers in each weight class will battle it out at noon today to try and earn a state medal.

For Holtzen and Younggren, however, just getting a state medal is not enough – not by a long shot.

Both wrestlers have their eyes squarely focused on a state championship. If either of them were to do it, they would be the school's first state champion since 2012.

"I'm expecting great things from both guys this weekend," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "They've both been coming in early this week to get in an extra workout, and they've been impeccably focused at practice after school. They've had some great support from teammates who've continued to come in to help them prepare for state.

"Both Cade and Alec have been very open to coaching this week, whether it's adjusting hip levels before shooting, keeping

shoulder pressure while on top, or hand control on bottom. They listen, and they apply what they learn. We're all excited for the tournament. It's not a matter of pressure where they're feeling like they have to go out and win. It's a matter of them being excited to compete, being thankful for the opportunity to pursue a state title. They have the mindset that they're not afraid of losing or making mistakes. That's where they need to be, and I think we have an incredible chance to bring home two state champions at the end of the day.

A lot is on the line and each wrestler has different things that have driven them this past week. It has been an emotional several days for the two Wildcat seniors and one they hope ends atop the medal stand.

## **Cade Holtzen**

After winning the 132-pound sub-state championship, and breaking the school's all-time win record last Saturday, Cade received a text from one of his biggest fans – his grandfather, C.D. Holtzen.

"He just let me know how proud he was of me and how he couldn't wait to see me wrestle," Cade said. "He loved watching me wrestle."

Just two days later, that text took on a whole different meaning.

Cade learned that C.D. passed away from a bout with cancer Monday. It made a week that started out with a lot of excitement, all of sudden one filled with sadness and grief.

"This has been a really tough week for me," Cade said. "It has been tough trying to stay focused. It has been harder than normal for sure, but I feel like I am in the right spot. I am practicing hard, wrestling hard and it is all about your drive at this point and who wants it more."





Before the week started, Cade really wanted to win a state title, but that drive has gone into another gear after learning of his grandfather's passing.

"In my day-to-day activities it is just always in the back of my mind that he is not around anymore," Cade said. "I never really got to say goodbye to him and that is hard, but it does make the drive more important. Instead of wrestling for me and my own goals, it adds another layer of what I am wrestling for."

Cade's father, Craig, made the journey up to visit C.D. last weekend and there was one topic C.D. didn't want to let go of.

"He loved watching me wrestle," Cade said. "He was a basketball guy for sure, actually my whole family is. My dad went down to see him last weekend after we wrestled at sub-state. He was the only one allowed to visit him and he was

trying to get my grandpa to make some videos to say hi to everyone, and all he would talk about was my wrestling and how excited he was to watch me. It meant the world to me.”

C.D. will be on the forefront of Cade’s mind as he competes in Salina today as he tries to win a 132-pound state championship.

Cade will open the tournament against Pratt’s Kaiser Pelland (30-9), who he beat in the blood round at last year’s state tournament. It was a win that assured Cade of his second state medal.



***Cade Holtzen talks with Louisburg head coach Bobby Bovaird following a match earlier this season.***

In fact, Holtzen will only need to win one match to assure himself another state medal, but that is not his goal.

“Winning one match isn’t enough,” he said. “I know one win gets me a medal, and that would make me a 3-time state placer. That is a big accomplishment, and I am not trying to downplay that, but the ultimate goal is to win a state title and for that I need three wins. You have to take it one match at a time, but after that one win it will make me a little less nervous.”

Should he win his first match, Holtzen could draw Mulvane’s Chadwick Stahl, who is a two-time state runner-up and the No. 2 ranked wrestler in the state, in the semifinals.

Cade has found himself watching a lot of matches of Pelland, Stahl and the rest of the 132-pound field and that has led to a lot of work in practice.

“I have done quite a bit of research on who else is there,” he said. “Stahl is the No. 2 kid in the state and I have watched some of his matches this year and have tried to figure out what he likes to do. I am just working on those things in the wrestling room so I can be more successful.”





His goal of a state title hasn't changed this week, but for Cade, who he is doing it for, has.

"I am wrestling for my grandpa this week and I am dedicating this to him," Cade said. "I want it more than anyone, not just for me, but for him and my family. It would mean the world. I know he will have the best seat in the house."

## **Alec Younggren**

Alec Younggren was won 35 straight matches through the 2021 season, is currently ranked No. 2 in the state at 220 pounds and is one of the favorites to possibly win a state title.

It hasn't always been this easy for the Louisburg senior.

Still, with all he has accomplished, Younggren still cannot get his last loss out of his head.

That loss came a year ago at the Class 6A state tournament when Younggren, a junior at the time, was wrestling for Olathe South.

He found himself in the semifinals against Wichita North's Jackson Stroud and it was a close match.

"It was back and forth," Younggren said. "He scored a takedown on me late in the third period. He was called for stalling once earlier in the match. Then we went neutral and he just ran away from me for the rest of the match. It is how he won and it just never sit right with me. He ended up winning state and that made it tougher."

Younggren would bounce back to finish third at state, but it was that one loss that has stuck with him for the next 365 days.



Now at a new school, Younggren has asserted his dominance while at Louisburg. He is stronger than he has ever been, and most of all, more driven.

“No doubt it has driven me to want to be that state champ,” he said. “After that match, I didn’t even know what else to do and where to go. I had to step up and get the next best thing and get third. I went out there and did it.

“I have been thinking about that day ever since it happened. Every single day I have gone over it in my head on what if I would have done something different, would I have won that match? It has been driving me to get better and do better things.”

Younggren isn’t the only one who wants him to do well as several members of the Wildcat team that saw their season come to an end last week, have returned to the practice room to help him and Cade Holtzen stay sharp for the state tournament.





***Alec Younggren leaps in the air to celebrate a teammate's victory earlier this season.***

"It is amazing," Younggren said. "I appreciate them so much for coming in. Their season is done and they could be home sleeping or eating or doing whatever, but they chose to come back into the wrestling room and help us get ready for what we want to do. I just love them for it because that is hard to do after your season has just come to an end. That proves how much you love the sport."

The Louisburg senior certainly has a love for wrestling and his drive for a state title hasn't slowed any. He and Holtzen have reported to the school at 6:15 a.m. for 45 minutes of conditioning, and then they will be in the practice room for a couple hours after school.

"It has definitely been a tougher week getting up early before school to workout for 45 minutes, going to school and then



practicing for a couple hours in the evening has definitely been tough, but it is what I have to do to place at state," Younggren said. "It is what I have to do to win that match I want to win."

That match is the state championship and Younggren knows he will have a lot of competition along the way.

Up to this point in the season, Younggren has earned 26 pins and getting past the first period has been a rarity. Only five of his matches have gone past the second period, and only one has gone the distance – which was a 12-1 major decision in December.

He will face Goodland's Dexter Dautel (26-12) in the first round, and should he advance, will face the winner of Clay Center's Keegan McDonald (28-5) and Baldwin's Toby Thomas (24-5). Younggren has yet to see McDonald, but he pinned Thomas two weeks ago.



On the other side of the bracket is No. 1 ranked Cayden Winter from Andale, who is 19-0 on the year. He has held that top ranking the entire season.

"I have watched a lot of his matches and I am trying to figure different things I need to do to beat him if we were to see each other," Younggren said. "He is a good wrestler."

A year later, Younggren feels he is in a different place with a different mindset.

"I feel like I am 10 times stronger and 10 times more experienced than I was last year," he said. "I learned so much last year, and coming into this year, on what I need to do and I what I need to do to win state. Leaps and bounds from where I was and know I know what it takes to win that title. I am a full 220 and last year I wasn't filled out. I weighed like 210 then, but now I am 220 on the dot and that helps me out a lot

with strength. I have worked hard for this moment.”

Needless to say, it is state title or bust for Younggren.

“Not winning a state title would be a disappointment for me,” he said. “There is nothing else I am thinking about.”

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## Four Wildcat wrestlers have season come to a close



***Louisburg senior Ryan Owens finished one win shy of making it to state Saturday during the Class 4A sub-state tournament in Chanute. Owens ended his Wildcat career with a state medal and his season with a 25-8 record.***

CHANUTE – As happy as Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird was to watch two of his wrestlers, Cade Holtzen and Alec Younggren qualify for state, he was just as heartbroken for the four that saw their season come to an end.

Senior Ryan Owens, junior Aiden Barker and sophomores Kaven Bartlett and Elijah Eslinger all finished outside of the top four Saturday during the Class 4A sub-state tournament at Chanute High School. It ended the season of all four wrestlers, but Bovaird couldn't have been more proud of his team.

"I consider the other four guys to be state qualifiers," he said. "Had this season been like any normal season, they would have been in the top 16 at the state tournament. Making it to "state" this year is just like being in the blood round any other year. Cade and Alec only have to win one match and they're state medalists. I'm so proud of the guys who made it to sub-state."

Owens, who medaled at state last season at 120 pounds, fell one win short of reaching the final eight this season.

The Louisburg senior lost his opening round match to Fort Scott's Shawn Barrager, but bounced back to beat Perry-Lecompton's Mason Bahnmaier by a 12-4 major decision.

Unfortunately, it would be his only win of the day as he fell in a 14-4 major decision to Independence's Kohen Wright in the blood round. He then went on to lose his fifth place to Barrager.

Owens finished his season with a 25-8 record after the sixth place finish in the sub-state tournament.

"Ryan's senior season definitely didn't end how we all wanted it to end, and this is one of the toughest parts of coaching this sport," Bovaird said. "He's given so much to the program these past four years, and he made a huge impact on his teammates. Whether it was demonstrating focus and toughness on the mat or mentoring younger guys, I'm so proud of him. My heart breaks for him, and he's been a great leader for us."





***Aiden Barker puts Topeka Hayden's Will Devader on his back during his blood round match Saturday in Chanute. Barker was one win shy of making it to state.***

Barker was also win victory away from punching his ticket to state at 182 pounds. He reached the semifinals by pinning Osawatomie's Seth Carrow in the first period of the quarterfinal round.

He then faced Chanute's Brayden Dillow, the eventual sub-state champion, and was pinned in the second period.

In a must-win match in the consolation semifinals, Barker had a rematch with Topeka-Hayden's Will Devader. The two squared off in the regional title match the week before, with Barker getting the win.

Devader got his revenge in a back-and-forth match as he outlasted Barker in a 14-10 decision and ended the Louisburg

junior's shot at state. Barker (27-10) did rebound to win his fifth place match with a pin of Carrow again.

"Aiden lost a real heart-breaker in his second-to-last match," Bovaird said. "It was against the same kid he'd beaten the week before in the regional finals, and just like last time, it was a back-and-forth match. He left it all out there, and I'm really proud of how he bounced back to win his final match for 5th place. Most kids would have just thrown their hands up and said 'who cares?' Aiden stepped out there, overcame the strong emotions after losing the previous match, and finished his season with a win."



***Louisburg sophomore Kaven Bartlett lost a pair of 1-0 decisions Saturday at the Class 4A sub-state tournament.***

As for Bartlett (126 pounds) and Eslinger (285), both finished with 0-2 records after competing in two difficult weight classes.



Bartlett (21-15) battled in both of his matches as he fell in a 1-0 decision to Independence's Cooper Anderson in the quarterfinals. Then in his first consolation match, lost by another 1-0 decision to Iola's TJ Taylor.

Eslinger (18-16) was pinned in the second round in both of his matches by Coffeyville's Brady White, the eventual champion, and Holton's Dustin Chermok.



***Sophomore heavyweight Elijah Eslinger finished his sub-state 0-2, but ended the season with a winning record.***

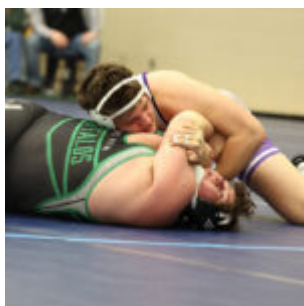
"Kaven went 0-2, but you've got to consider how tough he's been wrestling," Bovaird said. "Both losses were 1-0, and that shows how close he was. Just think how many opportunities that could have gone his way to make the score 2-1, 3-1, or 1-1 even. He's been dedicated all season, and he wrestled his heart out at Sub-State.

"Elijah has really made huge strides this year, and I'm so excited for his future. He's really figured a lot of things

out, and with gained confidence and experience on the mat, he's got two solid seasons ahead of him. He's really getting strong on his feet and on top, which require skills that will definitely pay off not only in wrestling, but also football."

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## Younggren pins down state berth in convincing fashion



***Louisburg senior Alec Younggren gets a pin of Prairie View's Noah Nordgren on Saturday during the Class 4A sub-state tournament.***

CHANUTE – Alec Younggren has struggled more to break a sweat this season than he has to beat his opponents.

It was much of the same Saturday during the Class 4A sub-state tournament in Chanute. Younggren spent a total of about four minutes in his three matches combined on his way to another title.

Younggren won the 220-pound sub-state championship in convincing fashion with three pins and kept his perfect season intact.

"Since my sophomore and junior year, I have always been gunning for a state title and to be where I am means so much to me and it has been an amazing experience for me," Younggren



said. "Being at a new school, coming to new places and seeing different opponents, it just means so much to be able to get this point in my senior year."

The Louisburg senior transferred to the school from Olathe South, where he finished third at state in Class 6A last year. Since his last loss in the 6A semifinals, Younggren has won 37 straight matches, including a 35-0 record this season.

Younggren has been as dominant as any wrestler in the state and it showed Saturday.

He opened the tournament with a pin of Prairie View's Noah Nordgren in 52 seconds and then pinned Topeka-Hayden's Clayton Stephenson in 57 seconds.

In a rarity, Younggren had to go to the second period in the championship match, but pinned Holton's Dalton Roush in 2 minutes and 26 seconds.

"He didn't really make me mad till the second period, so I had to get after him a little bit," Younggren said. "I felt I wrestled pretty good. I feel like I can get better every day and every time I step on the mat I need to improve somehow. I feel amazing right now and I can't wait for state."

Getting past the first period has been a rarity for Younggren. The Louisburg senior has 23 pins on the season, and only five of his matches have gone past the second period.



***Alec Younggren takes Topeka-Hayden's Clayton Stephenson to the mat Saturday during the semifinals of the Class 4A sub-state in Chanute. Younggren pinned Stephenson in 57 seconds.***

Only one of his 35 wins have gone the distance, which was a 12-1 major decision against a Shawnee Heights wrestler back in December.

The one setback with all of the early wins has been trying to stay in wrestling shape as he hasn't logged many minutes on the season. So Younggren has been doing different things to stay in shape.

"You have to push yourself inside and outside of practice," Younggren said. "You have to find different ways to build your endurance, even if it is not on the mat. Whether it is running or working out more, I just have to get better any way I can."

Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird has seen his hard work first

hand and he knows Younggren has been a great fit with the Wildcat team.

“He’s been a great leader in the practice room,” Bovaird said. “There’s always something about him that rubs off on his teammates. He’s excited for the postseason, not because he’s ready for it to be over, but because he’s itching to get after his own goals. He puts himself through extra workouts all the time, and he helps coach his teammates whenever he gets the chance.

Even though it is Younggren’s first season with the program, he has fit right in with the Wildcat team. He already knew Ryan Owens and Cade Holtzen from kids wrestling, which made the transition pretty seamless.

Holtzen will join Younggren at the state tournament this Saturday in Salina. Holtzen also won a sub-state title at 132 pounds.

“It is awesome,” Younggren said. “When I first got here I really didn’t know a whole lot of people and (Cade) was one of the first one to talk to me and helped me get to know some other people. It really means a lot that I can spend my senior year and have Cade go to state with me. I feel really welcome here in Louisburg.”

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## **Holtzen earns state bid, breaks school record in the**

# process



***Louisburg senior Cade Holtzen tries to keep Fort Scott's Coby Burchett on the mat Saturday during the Class 4A sub-state championship match in Chanute.***

CHANUTE – After his freshman year, Cade Holtzen set some big goals for himself.

However, at the time, it might have seemed a little out of reach. Holtzen garnered 45 wins his freshman year, which is still the school record for most wins in a season and gave him a head start of possibly getting the school record for career wins.

It was going to be a difficult chore as Austin Hood, a 3-time state champion, set the record with 150 wins in 2012. Still, Holtzen has always had his eye on the prize.

“We had a lot of matches that year and I was put in a situation where I was able to get a lot of wins,” Holtzen said. “I have always had lofty goals and this was one of them.”

Holtzen rewrote the record books Saturday at the Class 4A sub-state tournament in Chanute. Going into the tournament, he was sitting at 149 wins, but the Louisburg senior won the 132-pound sub-state crown with a 3-0 record, which put him at 152 wins in his career.

It was an emotional day for Holtzen as he achieved milestones in each of his three matches.



Holtzen recorded win No. 150 to tie the record with a first period pin of Frontenac's Peyton Wilderman. In his next match, Holtzen officially qualified for state in his semifinal match as he defeated Tonganoxie's Noah Bailey in a 5-2 decision and also broke the school record at the same time.



"It was a really good day and I am really excited about everything that happened," Holtzen said. "I was hoping to get it a little earlier, but to finally get the record made it a spectacular day. It is really awesome. Just want to thank my team, coaches and my parents for supporting me throughout this whole journey. Without them I wouldn't be winning sub-state

and breaking school records.”

Then came the sub-state title as Holtzen, who is currently ranked No. 3 in the state, outlasted No. 4 Coby Burchett from Fort Scott in a 4-1 decision.

“He is a tough kid,” Holtzen said of Burchett. “He was looking for some throws and that was something different that I haven’t had to deal with. I had to wrestle in better positions and a little more cautions from other positions in neutral. I feel like I could have wrestled better toward the end. I gave up a couple silly stalling calls there, but I feel I wrestled pretty good overall.”

It was the third title in as many weeks for Holtzen as he won district and regional championships the two weeks before. He now has a 35-1 record and is one of eight wrestlers remaining in the state.

“This is a big deal for me,” he said. “I said last year after my last match that my goal was to win a state title so that is what I am gunning for. Winning the sub-state title gets me that much closer to my goal. It will be tough at state and any of those guys can win it on any given day. It is a tough bracket, but I am looking forward to it.”

Holtzen has been a staple of winning for the Louisburg program as has earned two state medals in his three years and is looking for a third this Saturday at the state tournament in Salina.



***Cade Holtzen takes down Tonganoxie's Noah Bailey in the 132-pound semifinals Saturday in Chanute.***

"Cade has been a consistent force for our program for the past four years, and I was so excited when I realized that he'd be within grasp of breaking the school record this year," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "With all the uncertainty of Covid-19 this year, I was worried that Cade (and others) wouldn't have the chance to reach his full potential this season. He's been more focused and dedicated than I've ever seen him, and over the last four years, he's very rarely lacked focus and dedication to any extent. He's set a lofty goal for himself, and I think he's within reach of attaining that goal."

That other goal – winning a state title.

Holtzen will open the tournament against Pratt's Kaiser Pelland, who he beat in the blood round at the state tournament last year. If he wins, he could meet Mulvane's Chadwick Stahl, who is a 2-time state runner-up.

No matter who he faces, Holtzen is going to leave it all out on the mat in his final go-round.

“You can always get better, but mentally I feel like I am stronger than anyone in the state,” Holtzen said. “If it ever comes down to a close match, I am just going to gut it out more than they can.”

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## Six Wildcats move on to sub-state wrestling



***Louisburg senior Cade Holtzen locks up an opponent for some back points during a 132-pound match Friday during the Class 4A regional tournament at Jefferson West.***

MERIDEN – Although wrestlers still have another tournament to go to get to the state tournament in this revised version of the postseason, those moving on from last Friday’s regional tournament is equivalent to qualifying for state in pre-Covid times.

So when Louisburg saw six wrestlers finish in the top four of the Class 4A regional at Jefferson West, the Wildcats were more than pleased with what they accomplished.

Seniors Cade Holtzen (132 pounds), Alec Younggren (220) and junior Aiden Barker (182) each won regional titles. Senior



Ryan Owens was second (120), while sophomores Kaven Bartlett (126) and Elijah Eslinger (285) took third and fourth, respectively.

As a team, Louisburg finished strong as it took fourth with 119 points. Tonganoxie won the regional title with 225 points.

“It was great to get those six qualified for sub-state,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “To me, it shows that we have a solid core of tournament wrestlers. Those are typically our key point-scorers in duals. Moving 6 of the 7 to the next qualifier and finishing in fourth place was a great showing for us.

“Cade, Ryan, and Alec performed excellently, and it was a great thing for Kaven and Aiden to get redemption from last year. Both lost in the blood round at regionals in very close matches, and those losses have fueled them both. Elijah making it through is also a great thing. He’s really turned the corner this year.”

Younggren continued his perfect season Friday as his three wins moved him to 32–0 on the year. The Louisburg senior has done it in impressive fashion and his regional title match was a special one.

Younggren squared off with Baldwin’s Toby Thomas, who is ranked No. 3 in the state at 220 pounds and pinned him in just 50 seconds. In fact, all three of his wins came by pin in under a minute.

It was also career win No. 100 for Younggren as the No. 2 ranked wrestler in 4A continues his quest for a state title.



***Alec Younggren takes down his Ottawa opponent Friday during the Class 4A regional tournament.***

Holtzen also has high state goals as he improved his record to 32-1 on the season, including a 6-2 decision over Ottawa's Liam Sutton in the regional finals. The Louisburg senior is also ranked No. 2 in the state.

"Cade is really showing his motivation for that state championship," Bovaird said. "He's aggressive and driven, and he's not letting himself be complacent with his performances. Alec is just running through his brackets right now."

Barker continued his postseason success as he was his first two matches by pin, including a third period pin over Jefferson West's Keaton Shelman in the semifinals. Barker then faced off with Topeka Hayden's Will Devader.

The Louisburg junior found himself down early, but put Devader

on his back in the second period, but couldn't get the pin due to a blood issue with Devader. Barker didn't let that stop him as he put Devader on his back again to record the 14-8 decision and capture a regional crown.



***Aiden Barker works for a pin during his 182-pound championship match Friday at Jefferson West.***

"Aiden has made a statement lately with his matches," Bovaird said. "He's gotten multiple wins over a returning state qualifier from Ottawa, a pin over a solid kid from Jeff West, and wins over two seniors in the last two tournaments (a state-ranked wrestler from Bishop Miege and a tough kid from Hayden)."

At 120 pounds, Owens recorded a pair of technical falls to reach the championship match, where he met Holton' Jake Barnes – who had just one loss coming into the tournament.





***Ryan Owens finished as a regional runner-up at 120-pounds after a pair of technical falls.***

Barnes showed why he was ranked No. 5 in the state as he prevented Owens from scoring. Owens eventually fell in a hard-fought 4-1 decision.

“Ryan is wrestling strong lately, scoring lots of points and coming close to the school record for career technical falls,” Bovaird said. “He battled to a 4-1 loss against a 3-time state placer from Holton in the regional finals.”

Bartlett had a tough road at 126 pounds as he fell to the defending state champion in the semifinals, but the Louisburg sophomore battled Holton’s Kayden Elliott to a 5-1 decision to secure a spot at sub-state and then held on for a 2-1 win over Eudora’s Mac Douglass in the third-place match.





***Sophomore Kaven Bartlett pins his Atchison opponent Friday on his way to a third place regional finish.***

Eslinger, the sophomore heavyweight, also showed improvement. After opening the tournament with a forfeit, he fell to No. 1 seed Hayden Robb in the semifinals, before bouncing back with a pin of Tonganoxie's Cooper Jones to secure a spot in sub-state. Eslinger was later pinned in the third place match.

"Kaven, now that he's at a more natural weight, is wrestling with focus and determination," Bovaird said. "He gives each match everything he's got. Elijah is finally figuring things out – after spending last year as a 220-pound freshman wrestling 285, he's now got confidence, strength, experience, and a new-found sense of aggression."

Each of those wrestlers are among the final 16 in their weight class and would have been a part of those traditional 16-wrestler state brackets in year's past.



***Sophomore heavyweight Elijah Eslinger pulls his opponent back onto the match Friday during the regional tournament.***

The Wildcats will travel to Chanute on Saturday for the sub-state tournament as they top four in each class will advance to Salina next week for the state tournament.

"Making it through sub-state this year will be like battling through to the 'blood round' of state any other year," Bovaird said. "By placing in the top-4 at sub-state, a wrestler has earned his way to the final 8 in the state. KSHSAA is medaling the top 6 wrestlers at state, which means two guys go home empty-handed. It'll be a tough road, that's for sure."

Still as tough as the road will be, the Wildcats are making the most out of every moment.

"It's a marathon from the start of the qualifying series to the top of the podium," Bovaird said. "What used to be a two-week process is now nearly a month-long deal, and there are lots of unknowns that will impact the results. One thing is

for sure – our Cats are ready to take care of business.

“Guys are asking for more mat time, they’re wanting to do morning workouts, and they’re pushing themselves at practice without me having to light any fires. At the end of the day Saturday, our guys will have given it everything they’ve got, and win or lose, they will have represented the Wildcat Wrestling program, our school, and the community very well.”

## 120

Ryan Owens (24-5) placed 2nd and scored 19.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Ryan Owens (Louisburg) 24-5 won by tech fall over Presley Herrig (Tonganoxie) 3-13 (TF-1.5 1:33 (16-0))
- Semifinal – Ryan Owens (Louisburg) 24-5 won by tech fall over Archer Willis (Atchison) 20-5 (TF-1.5 4:00 (16-0))
- 1st Place Match – Jake Barnes (Holton) 23-1 won by decision over Ryan Owens (Louisburg) 24-5 (Dec 4-1)

## 126

Kaven Bartlett (21-13) placed 3rd and scored 14.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 21-13 won by fall over John Collins (Atchison) 7-13 (Fall 1:14)
- Semifinal – Grayson Sonntag (Tonganoxie) 20-0 won by fall over Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 21-13 (Fall 0:33)
- Cons. Semi – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 21-13 won by decision over Kayden Elliott (Holton) 11-9 (Dec 5-1)
- 3rd Place Match – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 21-13 won by decision over Mac Douglas (Eudora) 8-7 (Dec 2-1)

## 132

Cade Holtzen (32-1) placed 1st and scored 22.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) 32-1 received a bye ( ) (Bye)

- Semifinal – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) 32-1 won by fall over Slater Skaggs (Holton) 17-8 (Fall 4:00)
- 1st Place Match – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) 32-1 won by decision over Liam Sutton (Ottawa) 21-10 (Dec 6-2)

## 182

Aiden Barker (25-8) placed 1st and scored 24.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) 25-8 won by fall over Tyler Phillips (Holton) 5-11 (Fall 1:35)
- Semifinal – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) 25-8 won by fall over Keaton Shelman (Meriden-Jefferson West) 22-7 (Fall 5:37)
- 1st Place Match – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) 25-8 won by decision over Will Devader (Topeka-Hayden) 19-5 (Dec 14-8)

## 195

Trace Eslinger (3-7) place is unknown and scored 0.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Konnor Tannahill (Holton) 24-1 won by fall over Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 3-7 (Fall 0:49)
- Cons. Round 1 – Aaron Hicks (Eudora) 12-17 won by fall over Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 3-7 (Fall 4:01)

## 220

Alec Younggren (32-0) placed 1st and scored 26.0 team points.

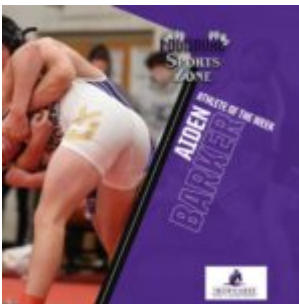
- Quarterfinal – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) 32-0 won by fall over Ryan Oesterreich (Meriden-Jefferson West) 12-19 (Fall 0:45)
- Semifinal – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) 32-0 won by fall over Cooper Stone (Ottawa) 2-4 (Fall 0:28)
- 1st Place Match – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) 32-0 won by fall over Toby Thomas (Baldwin) 21-4 (Fall 0:50)



Elijah Eslinger (18-14) placed 4th and scored 14.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 18-14 won by forfeit over Nathan Blakely (Atchison) 26-4 (For.)
  - Semifinal – Hayden Robb (Perry-Lecompton) 14-0 won by fall over Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 18-14 (Fall 0:42)
  - Cons. Semi – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 18-14 won by fall over Cooper Jones (Tonganoxie) 8-16 (Fall 2:21)
  - 3rd Place Match – Aaron Clevenger (Ottawa) 22-10 won by fall over Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 18-14 (Fall 1:31)
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## Week 9 Athlete of the Week: Aiden Barker



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

## Aiden Barker, Junior, Wrestling

Louisburg junior Aiden Barker had a career day Friday for the Wildcat wrestling program. Barker, who wrestles at 182 pounds, won the Class 4A regional title with a 3-0 record and earned a

spot in the final 16 for the first time. He recorded two pins and then defeated Topeka-Hayden's Will Devader by a 14-8 decision in the championship match.

Barker seems to be wrestling his best at the right time as he has posted a 25-8 record on the season to go along with 18 pins. Barker and the five other Louisburg sub-state qualifiers helped the Wildcats to a fourth place finish in the team standings at the Jefferson West regional.

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: Jordan Mynsted

Week 2: Julian Margrave

Week 3: Alec Younggren

Week 4: Megan Foote

Week 5: Madilyn Melton

Week 6: Michael Seuferling

Week 7: Cade Holtzen

Week 8: Ryan Owens

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# Wildcats qualify seven for regional tournament



***Junior Aiden Barker works for a pin during Saturday's district tournament at Santa Fe Trail High School. Barker won the 182-pound weight class.***

CARBONDALE – It was the beginning of a different postseason for the Louisburg wrestling team Saturday at Santa Fe Trail High School.

In fact, it was a first for all the teams at the Class 4A District Tournament. This postseason was going to be much different than anything they have seen.

The district tournament was just the first of three stops before a wrestler has the opportunity to reach the state level. The top four in each weight class had the opportunity

to advance and the Wildcats saw seven move on to the regional round.

Louisburg put six wrestlers in the district finals, and one in the consolation finals, as the Wildcats went on to finish fourth with 165 points. Ottawa won the district crown with 249.

"I'm very proud of how those seven did this weekend, and I'm very happy with our performance," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Of course, there were five who didn't move on, and I'm just as proud of them as the others. This was our first traditional double-elimination bracket of the season, and even though they've all wrestled in this type of competition before, our season has largely been focused on the mentality of having as strong a dual team as possible.

"I think that's definitely helped our competitive mindset – in duals, we try to score more bonus points by winning with pins, techs, and majors, and we also try to avoid giving up those things. In a tournament format, the team scoring is different, but the guys all battled in every match."

Ryan Owens (120 pounds), Cade Holtzen (132 pounds), Aiden Barker (182) and Alec Younggren (220) each captured the district title. Kaven Bartlett (126) and Elijah Eslinger (285) also made the finals, but finished second.

Sophomore Trace Eslinger (195) also advanced to regionals after he finished fourth.





***Senior Ryan Owens gets some back points during his 120-pound semifinal match Saturday.***

For Owens, Holtzen and Younggren – it was business as usual for the three Wildcats seniors. The three, who won state medals a year ago, moved on without a problem.

Owens, opened the tournament with a pair of technical falls, and then outlasted Baldwin's Nakos Benton in a 12-8 decision in the championship.

As for Holtzen, the No. 2 wrestler in the state, he recorded a pair of pins – including one of Ottawa's Liam Sutton in the championship – to win the 132 pound crown.

Younggren was just as dominant as the No. 2-ranked wrestler at 220 pounds had two first period pins to move his record to 29-0 on the season.



***Cade Holtzen works for a pin Saturday during a match in the district tournament at Santa Fe Trail.***

"Cade and Ryan have had some tight matches this season, which is great for preparing them for the postseason," Bovaird said. "It's out of our control, but Alec really hasn't seen a true test. Only one match has gone all three periods and we haven't been able to get him matches against other ranked kids. The three of them are looking pretty solid. We've tried to adapt our season periodization so that they're peaking at the right time, and I think we're doing some things right in that aspect."

Barker's journey to a district title was more difficult as he had to go through a returning state qualifier and a state-ranked wrestler.

In the semifinals, Barker caught Ottawa's Wyatt Sink on his back in the third period in a hard fought match to advance to

championship, where he faced off with No. 6 ranked Angel Franco from Bishop Miege.

Barker and Franco's match went the distance as he outlasted Franco for a 9-8 decision, in what was a back and forth match.

"Two great things happened with Aiden on Saturday," Bovaird said. "One, he was able to get a second win over a returning state qualifier from Ottawa and two, he was able to get a win in the finals over a state-ranked wrestler from Bishop Miege.

"After both of those matches, I told him that he's causing my blood pressure to soar with some of the mistakes he's making, but at the same time he's aggressive, relentless, and confident. We can work to refine the technique errors, but those mindset strengths are things we can't really teach. A kid has to develop them them and apply them himself."

Bartlett and Elijah Eslinger both had competitive matches in the finals, but Bartlett came up short in a 5-1 decision to Ottawa's Parker Guge and Eslinger went on to get pinned by Ottawa's Aaron Clevinger. Earlier in the day, Bartlett won his first two matches by pin in the first period and Eslinger won his semifinal match by pin.

Trace Eslinger, who filled in at 195 pounds due to injury, also had a good day as he won a 5-3 decision in his first match, before falling 3-2 in the third place match to Baldwin's Zayne Nowak.





***Alec Younggren gets a pin Saturday in the district championship to improve his record to 29-0 on the season.***

"Kaven is hitting his stride very well right now," Bovaird said. "Since moving down to 126, he's been able to win a lot of great matches. The kid he lost to in the finals had pinned him earlier in the season, but at districts it was a lot closer – even closer than the 5-1 score suggests. He's in a great position for moving into the next round after regionals.

"Elijah got a revenge win against in the semifinals by pinning his Baldwin opponent, and then he looked very competitive against his Ottawa opponent in the finals. Trace Eslinger stepped up and filled in at 195 this weekend after Johnathan Keegan-Childs was unable to be cleared to wrestle. He'd hurt his shoulder against Eudora a week ago. Trace got a key win in the first round and then found himself battling in a close match for 3rd place. The remarkable thing is that he normally weighs about 175 pounds."



Five Wildcats saw their season come to an end as Noah Cotter (106), Traden Noll (138), Jarrett Hoyle (145), Jesse Murphy (152) and Jacob Briley (170) each finished outside the top four.

"Our guys who didn't make it to the next tournament definitely went out fighting, especially Noah and Jarrett," Bovaird said. "Noah nearly won his last match for 5th place, but dropped an 8-6 overtime decision to his Eudora opponent. Jarrett won his final match for 5th place by getting a pin. Although his season is over, it's a great way to end things. A lot of tears were shed, especially by our seniors Hoyle and Jacob Briley."



**Sophomore Trace Eslinger finished fourth at 195 pounds and advanced to regionals.**

Louisburg will look to continue its success this Friday when it travels to the Class 4A regional at Jefferson West High School. Matches are set to begin at 3 p.m., and the top four advance to next week's sub-state tournament in Chanute.

"It's going to be a dogfight, that's for sure," Bovaird said. "All seven of our guys have shots at moving on, but nothing is ever guaranteed."

## **106**

Noah Cotter (12-18) placed 6th and scored 3.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Graham Hawks (Shawnee Mission-Bishop Miege) 17-20 won by fall over Noah Cotter (Louisburg) 12-18 (Fall 1:46)
- Cons. Round 1 – Noah Cotter (Louisburg) 12-18 received a bye ( ) (Bye)
- Cons. Semi – Ayedin Johnson (Baldwin) 21-11 won by fall over Noah Cotter (Louisburg) 12-18 (Fall 4:13)
- 5th Place Match – Russell Smith (Eudora) 1-18 won in sudden victory – 1 over Noah Cotter (Louisburg) 12-18 (SV-1 8-6)

## **120**

Ryan Owens (22-4) placed 1st and scored 23.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Ryan Owens (Louisburg) 22-4 won by tech fall over Frank Cressey (Shawnee Mission-Bishop Miege) 4-21 (TF-1.5 1:49 (16-0))
- Semifinal – Ryan Owens (Louisburg) 22-4 won by tech fall over Ian Meisbach (Santa Fe Trail) 9-18 (TF-1.5 2:28 (15-0))
- 1st Place Match – Ryan Owens (Louisburg) 22-4 won by decision over Nakos Benton (Baldwin) 24-10 (Dec 12-8)

## 126

Kaven Bartlett (18-12) placed 2nd and scored 20.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 18-12 won by fall over Jack Baron (Baldwin) 6-23 (Fall 0:48)
- Semifinal – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 18-12 won by fall over Trent Sleichter (Santa Fe Trail) 15-7 (Fall 0:25)
- 1st Place Match – Parker Guge (Ottawa) 14-2 won by decision over Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 18-12 (Dec 5-1)

## 132

Cade Holtzen (30-1) placed 1st and scored 24.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) 30-1 received a bye () (Bye)
- Semifinal – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) 30-1 won by fall over Cody Slavin (Santa Fe Trail) 8-8 (Fall 1:00)
- 1st Place Match – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) 30-1 won by fall over Liam Sutton (Ottawa) 19-9 (Fall 3:11)

## 138

Traden Noll (9-15) placed 5th and scored 5.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Chayse Jeanneret (Santa Fe Trail) 12-12 won by decision over Traden Noll (Louisburg) 9-15 (Dec 4-2)
- Cons. Round 1 – Traden Noll (Louisburg) 9-15 received a bye () (Bye)
- Cons. Semi – Miguel Andazola (Baldwin) 23-15 won by fall over Traden Noll (Louisburg) 9-15 (Fall 0:37)
- 5th Place Match – Traden Noll (Louisburg) 9-15 received a bye () (Bye)

## 145

Jarrett Hoyle (11-20) placed 5th and scored 7.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Luke Greenfield (Santa Fe Trail) 16-10

won by major decision over Jarrett Hoyle (Louisburg) 11-20 (MD 14-2)

- Cons. Round 1 – Jarrett Hoyle (Louisburg) 11-20 received a bye () (Bye)
- Cons. Semi – Richard Blevins (Ottawa) 20-10 won by fall over Jarrett Hoyle (Louisburg) 11-20 (Fall 1:18)
- 5th Place Match – Jarrett Hoyle (Louisburg) 11-20 won by fall over Josue Rosas (Kansas City-Bishop Ward) 2-6 (Fall 0:53)

## 152

Jesse Murphy (2-22) placed 5th and scored 5.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Joel Brown (Ottawa) 23-13 won by fall over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 2-22 (Fall 1:46)
- Cons. Round 1 – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 2-22 received a bye () (Bye)
- Cons. Semi – Jaiden Michael (Baldwin) 20-16 won by tech fall over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 2-22 (TF-1.5 2:34 (18-1))
- 5th Place Match – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 2-22 received a bye () (Bye)

## 170

Jacob Briley (8-21) placed 5th and scored 5.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Tyler Pankey (Shawnee Mission-Bishop Miego) 20-2 won by fall over Jacob Briley (Louisburg) 8-21 (Fall 0:55)
- Cons. Round 1 – Jacob Briley (Louisburg) 8-21 received a bye () (Bye)
- Cons. Semi – Dakota Whitaker (Eudora) 21-9 won by fall over Jacob Briley (Louisburg) 8-21 (Fall 1:32)
- 5th Place Match – Jacob Briley (Louisburg) 8-21 received a bye () (Bye)

## 182



Aiden Barker (22-8) placed 1st and scored 22.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) 22-8 received a bye () (Bye)
- Semifinal – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) 22-8 won by fall over Wyatt Sink (Ottawa) 22-7 (Fall 5:49)
- 1st Place Match – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) 22-8 won by decision over Angel Franco (Shawnee Mission-Bishop Miege) 25-8 (Dec 9-8)

## 195

Trace Eslinger (3-5) placed 4th and scored 9.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 3-5 won by decision over Isaiah Barnett (Kansas City-Bishop Ward) 9-13 (Dec 5-3)
- Semifinal – Jared Ferguson (Ottawa) 20-8 won by fall over Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 3-5 (Fall 1:24)
- Cons. Semi – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 3-5 received a bye () (Bye)
- 3rd Place Match – Zayne Nowak (Baldwin) 21-15 won by decision over Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 3-5 (Dec 3-2)

## 220

Alec Younggren (29-0) placed 1st and scored 24.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) 29-0 received a bye () (Bye)
- Semifinal – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) 29-0 won by fall over Cooper Stone (Ottawa) 1-1 (Fall 1:13)
- 1st Place Match – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) 29-0 won by fall over Devon Moncrief (Eudora) 7-11 (Fall 1:23)

## 285

Elijah Eslinger (16-12) placed 2nd and scored 18.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 16-12 received a bye ( ) (Bye)
- Semifinal – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 16-12 won by fall over Kaden Coons (Baldwin) 15-11 (Fall 1:55)
- 1st Place Match – Aaron Clevenger (Ottawa) 19-9 won by fall over Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 16-12 (Fall 1:40)

## **Hallas advances to regional tournament**

Louisburg had a representative in last Friday's girls district II tournament in Osawatomie and Bailey Hallas saw her season extend at least one more week.

Hallas took fourth in the 109-pound division last Friday in Osawatomie and moves on to the regional tournament Saturday in Burlington.

"I'm so excited about this," Bovaird said. "She has been a trooper all season, learning the sport and working to improve every week. She nearly had her last match won – leading 6-2 late in the third period, she got a little out of position with a cradle on top and got reversed to her back. She's got a great mindset and I'm excited to see how she competes this Saturday.

"There are a handful of young girl wrestlers coming up in the next few years, and Bailey and Amber Pritchett (along with the numerous girl wrestlers who came before them) have started a great foundation for our girls program."