

Week 8 Athlete of the Week: Ryan Owens



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

Ryan Owens, Senior, Wrestling

Louisburg senior Ryan Owens had a big day for the Wildcats during the Class 4A District Tournament last Saturday at Santa Fe Trail High School. Owens was one of four Wildcats to earn district titles as he went 3-0 at 120 pounds to qualify for the regional round. He recorded two technical falls and defeated Baldwin's Nakos Benton by a 12-8 decision in the championship.

Owens has had a big season for the Wildcats as the returning state medalist has a 22-4 record to go along with 10 pins and five technical falls. He is also five wins away from 100 career victories.

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

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LHS 2021 winter king and queen to be crowned Friday



This year's 2021 Louisburg High School winter homecoming candidates are (from left) Sydney Thornton, Alec Younggren, Olivia Barber, Luke Faulkner, Brooklyn Diederich, Dawson

Barnes, Madilyn Melton and Ben Guetterman.

Homecoming week at Louisburg High School kicked off Monday and events are in full swing. With something going on every day this week, it will be a busy time for students. All of it is, of course, centered around the crowning of the 2021 winter king and queen. Eight students were selected as nominees and here are their names and profiles.

The crowning will take place on Friday during halftime of the Wildcat boys' basketball game with Ottawa. Tipoff for that game is set for approximately 7:30 p.m. Good luck to all the participants and make sure to come out on Friday to support both the Wildcat girls and boys basketball teams if you can get your hands on tickets.



Olivia Barber and Luke Faulkner

Olivia Barber

Olivia is the daughter of Adam and Angie Barber. Olivia has participated in soccer for four years, National Honor Society, Interact Club and forensics for two years and FBLA, cheerleading and FCCLA for one year. After graduation, Olivia

plans to attend the University of Kansas and major in biology.

Luke Faulkner

Luke is the son of Brad Faulkner and Cindy Faulkner. Luke has participated in track for four years, soccer and yearbook for three years, FBLA for two years, and cross country and Interact Club for one year. Following graduation, Luke plans to attend Cowley Community College and pursue his track career.



Sydney Thornton and Alec Younggren

Sydney Thornton

Sydney is the daughter of Shawn and Megan Thornton. Sydney has participated in choir and FFA for four years, been the boys basketball manager for three years, softball for two years and student council for one year. Following graduation, Sydney

plans to attend the University of Central Missouri to major in nursing and then plans to attend medical school to become an OB/GYN.

Alec Younggren

Alec is the son of Jason and Monica Younggren. Alec has participated in football for four years and wrestling for four years. Following graduation, Alec will attend Fort Hays State University on a football scholarship and major in construction management.



Madilyn Melton and Ben Guetterman

Madilyn Melton

Madilyn is the daughter of Andy and Meghan Melton. Madilyn has participated in basketball for four years, volleyball for one

year and band for one year. Following graduation, Madilyn will attend Benedictine College on a basketball scholarship with the goal of becoming a dermatologist.

Ben Guetterman

Ben is the son of Ted and Lisa Guetterman. Ben has played basketball for four years, been a member of FFA for four years and played football for two years. Ben is currently undecided on his post-high school plans.



Brooklyn Diederich and Dawson Barnes

Brooklyn Diederich

Brooklyn is the daughter of Derek and Jenny Diederich. Brooklyn has participated in basketball and softball for four years, FBLA for three years and Interact Club and FFA for one

year. Following graduation, Brooklyn will attend Neosho County Community College on a basketball scholarship and major in occupational therapy.

Dawson Barnes

Dawson is the son of Rick and Cindy Barnes. Dawson has participated in basketball for four years, been a part of the football, volleyball and soccer student section for four years, baseball for one year and cross country for one year. Following graduation, Dawson plans to attend the University of Kansas and study psychology.







Wildcat wrestlers end regular season with winning week



Louisburg sophomore Jesse Murphy gets a pin during his 152-pound match Saturday against Rock Creek at Ottawa High School.

For the Louisburg wrestling team, duals this season have been a means to an end.

With more duals on the Wildcats' schedule to the COVID-19 restrictions, they don't have as many individual matches and those duals haven't gone Louisburg's way as much as it would have liked.

The dual season came to a close for the Wildcats last Friday and Saturday, but it certainly ended on a positive note them.

Louisburg swept a pair of league duals over Eudora and Piper on Friday at Eudora High School, and then on Saturday, got another win over Rock Creek at Ottawa. In all, Louisburg went 3-2 following losses to Ottawa and Concordia on Saturday.

Louisburg ended its Frontier League dual season with a 3-5 record and were 10-14 overall.

"The fact that we're putting a lot of inexperienced kids on the varsity mat has to have been disheartening for a lot of the guys on the team, but at the same time, we're giving up fewer forfeits than in previous years," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "I think the squad is building toward a solid conclusion for the season. They're doing great mentally, and our practices have been going really well."

Louisburg opened up against Eudora to begin Friday's action and the Wildcats took the early lead on a pin from senior Ryan Owens at 120 pounds, a technical fall from sophomore Kaven Bartlett at 126 and a major decision from Cade Holtzen at 132.

Eudora's middleweights, which is the strength of their team, began to take over and the Cardinals took a 38-27 lead following the 195-pound match.

Louisburg's heavyweights came through in a big way as senior Alec Younggren (220) and sophomore Elijah Eslinger (285) both earned pins to give Louisburg the 39-38 victory.



Louisburg senior Jacob Briley gets a pin during his 170-pound match Saturday in Ottawa.

“On paper, I suppose we shouldn’t have beaten Eudora,” Bovaird said. “There were some matches that we lost, but we only lost by a major decision – like at 145 and 152. Those are two of Eudora’s stronger weights, and (Jarrett) Hoyle and (Jesse) Murphy really showed a lot of guts and toughness by fighting off their attacks.

“It comes down to the fact that the whole team earned that victory by considering “bonus points.” A loss by decision only gives the other team 3 points, but a loss by pin gives them 6. Eudora is an experienced team, and to be able to come away from there with a win is a pretty good experience.”

The Wildcats used that momentum to cruise to a 54-22 win over Piper in their next dual.

The next day, Louisburg traveled to Ottawa for a matchup with the Cyclones, Rock Creek and Concordia.

After falling to Ottawa 46-36, and to Concordia 57-21, the Wildcats ended their day with a 52-24 victory over Rock Creek.

"I love getting the chance to see new teams, especially before state," Bovaird said. "Typically, we only get to see Concordia and Rock Creek at state, but this season, we got a glimpse of what 4A looks like in Central Kansas. There's the factor of seeing some "fresh" competition, but it's also a great measuring stick for what we might see as we get closer to the state championships.

"Both of those teams are tough, and we battled pretty well. A few matches against Concordia didn't go the way I'd planned, but that's an experienced team with a lot of kids who've been wrestling since they were little."

Holtzen and Younggren each won their three matches, as did Bartlett – who is settled into his new weight at 126. Combined, Bartlett went 5-0 over those two outings.



Louisburg sophomore Kaven Bartlett went 5-0 last weekend at 126 pounds.

"Last year, Kaven nearly had 30 wins, and this year he's had some challenges pop up in front of him," Bovaird said. "First, he had to bump up a couple weights after his initial November weigh-in at 119. He spent much of the first part of the season wrestling at 132, winning some great matches, but also finding himself up against some heavier opponents. Now that he's down to 126, he's comfortable and at more of a natural weight.

"He's weathered the storm of the season and kept a great focus on improving his wrestling skills. That's definitely given him some more confidence, and I'm pretty proud of how he's kept his focus through the lumps of giving up so much weight and suffering a broken nose in mid-January against Paola."

Also on Saturday, Owens went 2-1 at 120 pounds and senior Jacob Briley (170) and Eslinger did the same. Freshman Noah

Cotter (106), senior Jarrett Hoyle (145), sophomore Jesse Murphy (152) and junior Aiden Barker (182) each had a win.

Now the Wildcats will begin their focus on the postseason and that begins at noon Saturday when they travel to Santa Fe Trail High School for the Class 4A district tournament. The top four wrestlers from each weight class will move on to regionals Feb. 12 at Jefferson West High School.

Included with the Wildcats at districts is Baldwin, Eudora, Bishop Ward, Ottawa, Santa Fe Trail and Bishop Miege.

"I'm seeing more and more consistency from our guys," Bovaird said. "They're starting to apply more of what we're doing at practice, and I think it's paying off. The changes in our schedule, which have taken away most of our Saturday competitions, may very well have been a good thing. The team is looking strong and I'm seeing very little sign of fatigue or burn-out."

Week 7 Athlete of the Week: Cade Holtzen



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week seven of the winter sports season, sponsored by Vohs Pharmacy.

Cade Holtzen, Senior, Wrestling

Louisburg senior Cade Holtzen is trying for his third state medal in four years and he is certainly off to a good start in doing that. So far this season, Holtzen, who is ranked No. 4 in Class 4A at 132 pounds, is currently 28-1 on the season to go along with 13 pins.

Holtzen also had a nice outing recently for the Wildcat program as he finished last week with a 5-0 record that featured a technical fall and a major decision as he helped Louisburg to a 3-2 dual record.

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Previous winners:

Week 1: Jordan Mynsted

Week 2: Julian Margrave

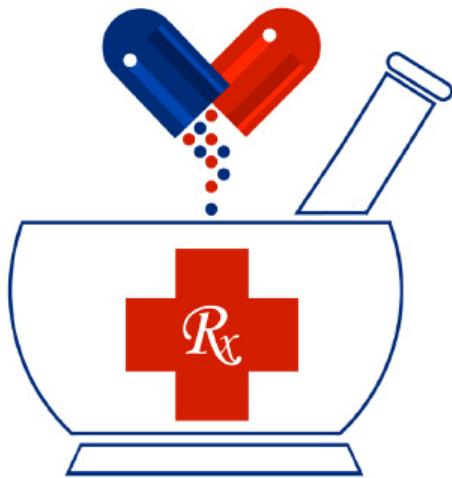
Week 3: Alec Younggren

Week 4: Megan Foote

Week 5: Madilyn Melton

Week 6: Michael Seuferling

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Wildcats honor seniors as they prepare for different looking postseason



Eight Louisburg wrestling seniors were recognized on Jan. 21 during Senior Night. (From left) manager Kadence Collins, head coach Bobby Bovaird, Jacob Briley, Alec Younggren, Ryan Owens,

Cade Holtzen, Luke Kelly, Jarrett Hoyle and manager Lexi Rogers.

The Louisburg wrestling team knew this season was going to be different than the others.

It was inevitable.

With the concerns of COVID-19, many schools have scrapped tournaments for duals, and that has resulted in fewer matches for many of the wrestlers.

It has affected the Wildcats, as with two open weight classes some nights, they struggle in the dual format. Louisburg has lost four duals in the last two weeks, including setbacks to Tonganoxie and Baldwin on Senior Night.

Even with that, the Wildcats are finding positives, in what otherwise is a tough situation for them and many others across the state.

“It’s been weird not going to some of the traditional competitions we’ve had in the past,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “I found out that Topeka USD 501 isn’t allowing wrestling at all this season, but they’re allowing basketball and swimming / diving in their district. They’re probably the only district in the state to not have wrestling this year. That’s always been a nice tournament for our guys to go and find some success. We aren’t getting as many matches as we’ve done in the past, which is frustrating. Cade Holtzen was on pace to win 150+ career matches, and Ryan Owens and Alec Younggren would have hit the 100+ career wins mark if we’d had our normal schedule.

“It’s been nice having the duals – it gives a traditional feel to the sport. Wrestling used to be about duals and head-to-head, and there was a strategy to winning duals. About 20 years ago, the trend changed to tournaments – maximize your competition points, get your kids as many matches as possible,

and push them to the point of exhaustion. I think this year has been nice with fewer weekend competitions. It allows the wrestlers (and the coaches) to enjoy life a little more. If there's been one good thing about Covid, it's been that for many of us, life has slowed down to one degree or another. We're enjoying things we hadn't typically been able to enjoy because of everything that is going on in our daily lives."

One of those positives came last week when Louisburg had a chance to honor their six senior wrestlers and two managers. Ryan Owens, Jarrett Hoyle, Luke Kelly, Cade Holtzen, Alec Younggren and Jacob Briley, along with managers Kadence Collins and Lexi Rogers, were honored with their parents.

Even with masks on, it was a ceremony that allowed a successful senior class to be honored.

The class has a combined 339 wins, 375 takedowns, 213 pins, 18 tech falls, 12 gold medals, 15 silver medals, seven trips to the state tournament and four state medals.



Louisburg senior Ryan Owens works for a pin against Baldwin last week.

“These seniors are a diverse group, and I’m so proud of each of them,” Bovaird said. “I’ve known Cade and Ryan since they were little, and they’ve truly come a long way over the last 10 years. Luke is a kid that I tried to convince to wrestle when he was a freshman, but it didn’t pan out. The next year, he was talked into it, and he’s been a true leader when it comes to work ethic and tough attitude. Jarrett is a prime example of what wrestling can do for a person. He started out in 7th grade, and the strides he’s made the last six years are incredible. He’s competitive, he’s coachable, and he’s done a fantastic job of mentoring younger wrestlers to help them learn the ropes.

“Jacob has finally gotten the chance to wrestle varsity at his own weight, rather than bumping up to fill a varsity hole.

He's working his tail off and looking more and more solid with each match. Alec has been a huge addition to the team. Not only has he been a leader in statistical categories, but he's able to bring his own experience, techniques, and styles to help all the guys in our room find their own way of being successful."

For Younggren, he has been as successful as any of the Wildcats this season. He transferred from Olathe South last season, where he finished third at Class 6A state at 220 pounds.



Senior Alec Younggren puts his Tonganoxie opponent on his back last week during Senior Night.

Younggren has continued to show his dominance as he has an unblemished record of 22-0 and is currently the No. 2 ranked wrestler at 220 pounds. His closest match this season has been

a 9-1 major decision back in December.

The lack of tournaments has decreased his match total and hasn't had the kind of challenges to test him that he will see in the postseason. Still, the coaches are doing their best to get him ready.

"When there's not quite a suitable practice partner in the room, that burden typically falls on the coaches' shoulders," Bovaird said. "Coach (Brandon) Ott and I have been taking turns working in with Alec the last week. We're mixing things up a little by having Alec work with Aiden Barker (who weighs about 40 pounds less than he does) and Elijah Eslinger, but often times, it's us coaches who get to step in and go live with him. It's painful, but definitely a way to help prepare him.

"There are many days when we see Alec jumping rope before practice or staying afterwards to do an extra workout. He's a driven young man, and I'm excited to see what he does as he progresses through the state championship series."

Including Younggren, the Wildcats have six wrestlers who have a .500 record or better.

Holtzen – a two-time state medalist – is currently ranked No. 4 in Class 4A at 132 pounds with a 23-1 mark. Owens, who finished fifth at state a season ago, has a 15-3 record at 120 pounds.

Junior Aiden Barker has had a strong season at 182 pounds with a 17-6 record and sophomore heavyweight Elijah Eslinger is 11-10. Sophomore Kaven Bartlett is 11-11 at 126 pounds.

Along with the changes to the regular season, the Wildcats will see a much-different looking postseason.

In the past, teams would compete in regional tournaments and the top four from each weight class advanced to state.

Now, to keep numbers down in competitions, the Kansas State High School Activities Association has broken the postseason up into three different tournaments – districts, regionals and sub-state.

Louisburg will travel to Santa Fe Trail High School on Feb. 6 for the district tournament that will include Baldwin, Eudora, Bishop Miege, Ottawa and Bishop Ward.



Senior Cade Holtzen tries to turn his opponent to his back last week against Tonganoxie.

The top four in each weight class will advance to regionals, which will take place on Feb. 12. The top four in each class at regionals, will then advance to sub-state on Feb. 20, which will be held in Chanute.

The top four from sub-state will move on to the one-day state tournament in Salina – a change from the usual two-day event.

"I'm disappointed in the decision KSHSAA made to adjust the postseason the way they did," Bovaird said. "Apparently, they did it without consulting very many people in the wrestling community – administrators and coaches. They're trying to make smaller tournaments to minimize possible Covid-19 exposure, but what they've essentially done is doubled the exposure. Sure, the first week of postseason will just be 7-8 teams, rather than 15-16. It might be a one-day tournament, but the next weekend at regionals, another single-day tournament, there will be 15-16 schools / communities represented. At sub-state, there may be as many as 32 communities represented, and state will have anywhere from 54-64 communities represented. Instead of two weekends of exposure, there are now four weekends.

"If a kid makes it through districts, and then the kid comes down with Covid-19, then his entire team is out for the rest of the season. Depending on the county and all of the various policies, there may be contract tracing ramifications that wipe out an entire wrestling district. I wish they would have done some more research and consulting. I'd rather have the traditional regional tournament – 15-16 teams, two days – at the start of February and keep state at the same time. That way, we'd have time for quarantined kids to get cleared and get back on the mat before state, minimizing the disruption to the competition. But, it is what it is.

"I'm not sure what the changes will mean for us," Bovaird added. "Essentially, to qualify for the state tournament this year, it means you have to do the equivalent of making it to the "blood round" at the traditional state tournament of previous years. That's tough. A lot of returning state placers, state-ranked kids, and truly excellent wrestlers will be sitting at home instead of warming up in Salina this year, and that's sad. I don't think it's fair to tell these kids, "Hey, at least you got a season." That's not good enough. Our kids deserve better."

Louisburg has two more sets of duals before the start of the postseason. On Friday, the Wildcats travel to Eudora and will also face Piper.

The Wildcats will then travel to Ottawa on Saturday for a quad with Rock Creek and Concordia.

Wildcats finish third at home tournament



Louisburg senior Alec Younggren locks his opponent up for a pin Saturday at the Wildcat Invitational. Younggren was 5-0 on the day and earned all-tournament honors.

It was a chance for the Louisburg wrestling team to show off for their home fans, at least who were able to attend due to COVID restrictions.

So for Louisburg, the Wildcat Invitational gave them the opportunity to do just that as the Wildcats competed in the 8-team dual format tournament.

The Wildcats made it to the championship bracket, but fell to state-ranked Eudora in the semifinals. Still, Louisburg was able to bounce back to defeat Anderson County, 51-27, to take third overall.

Louisburg, which finished with a 3-2 dual record on the day, also had two wrestlers earn all-tournament honors. Seniors Cade Holtzen (132 pounds) and Alec Younggren (220) each finished with a 5-0 record.



Cade Holtzen was 5-0 on Saturday during the Wildcat Invitational and earned all-tournament honors at 132 pounds.

Holtzen had four pins on the day and Younggren finished with two. Younggren is currently 17-0 and ranked No. 2 in 4A at 220 pounds, while Holtzen is ranked No. 5 in 4A.

The Wildcats opened the tournament with three duals in pool action. Louisburg began with a convincing 60-18 victory over Royal Valley and then downed Girard, 54-18.

That set up an important match against Turner. The Golden Bears jumped out to a 15-0 lead, but the Wildcats won the next three on forfeits.

Turner held a 12-point advantage going into the final two matches, but Younggren recorded a first period pin and heavyweight Elijah Eslinger won by forfeit that finished with a 36-all tie.

The Golden Bears won the tiebreaker based on the number of matches won and that sent the Wildcats to the championship bracket to face state-ranked Eudora.

Eudora went on to defeat the Wildcats, 45-36, but Louisburg responded with a win over Anderson County.

Sophomore Kaven Bartlett had a good day at 126 pounds with a 4-1 record as did freshman Traden Noll (138). Senior Jarrett Hoyle (145), Junior Aiden Barker (182) and Eslinger (285) also finished the day with four victories.



Junior Aiden Barker finished Saturday's tournament with a 4-1

record.

Louisburg is back in action tonight when it hosts Paola and Ottawa for a pair of Frontier League duals. Matches begin at 5 p.m.

106 Results

Noah Cotter of Louisburg went 3-2

- 106 – Colby Cross (Turner) over Noah Cotter (Louisburg) Fall 1:07
- 106 – Russell Smith (Eudora) over Noah Cotter (Louisburg) Dec 8-4
- 106 – Noah Cotter (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 106 – Noah Cotter (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 106 – Noah Cotter (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

126 Results

Kaven Bartlett of Louisburg went 4-1

- 126 – Nicky Gutierrez (Turner) over Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) Dec 3-1
- 126 – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) over Braden Hayes (Eudora) Fall 1:16
- 126 – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 126 – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) over Brayden Hermreck (Anderson County) Fall 1:40
- 126 – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) over Beau Harris (Girard) Fall 5:12

132 Results

Cade Holtzen of Louisburg went 5-0

- 132 – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) over Quinton Nelson

(Royal Valley) Fall 1:46

- 132 – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) over Carter Sommer (Anderson County) Fall 2:42
- 132 – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) over Bryer Glaser (Girard) Fall 3:15
- 132 – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 132 – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) over Joe Faircloth (Eudora) Fall 1:42

138 Results

Tradon Noll of Louisburg went 4-1

- 138 – Tradon Noll (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 138 – Cael Lynch (Eudora) over Tradon Noll (Louisburg) Fall 1:42
- 138 – Tradon Noll (Louisburg) over Kyle Riley (Royal Valley) Fall 2:33
- 138 – Tradon Noll (Louisburg) over Colten Wittman (Anderson County) Dec 6-4
- 138 – Tradon Noll (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

145 Results

Jarrett Hoyle of Louisburg went 4-1

- 152 – Jarrett Hoyle (Louisburg) over Chase Emery (Royal Valley) Fall 0:00
- 145 – John Wright (Anderson County) over Jarrett Hoyle (Louisburg) Fall 0:52
- 145 – Jarrett Hoyle (Louisburg) over Connor Olivera (Girard) Fall 2:00
- 145 – Jarrett Hoyle (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 145 – Jarrett Hoyle (Louisburg) over Mason Cox (Eudora) Fall 1:29

152 Results

Jesse Murphy of Louisburg went 0-4

- 152 – Will Schreiner (Eudora) over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) Fall 1:45
- 152 – Ashton Miller (Anderson County) over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) Fall 0:19
- 152 – Christian Taylor (Girard) over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) Fall 1:40
- 152 – Bryon Kirkwood (Turner) over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) Fall 1:48

160 Results

Brett Rangel of Louisburg went 2-3

- 160 – Brett Rangel (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 160 – Jarrett Buckle (Girard) over Brett Rangel (Louisburg) Fall 2:27
- 160 – Raymond Carrillo (Turner) over Brett Rangel (Louisburg) Fall 0:59
- 160 – Dayton Fraser (Eudora) over Brett Rangel (Louisburg) Fall 1:33
- 160 – Brett Rangel (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

170 Results

Jacob Briley of Louisburg went 2-3

- 170 – Dakota Whitaker (Eudora) over Jacob Briley (Louisburg) Fall 1:42
- 170 – Jacob Briley (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 170 – Tyler Denny (Anderson County) over Jacob Briley (Louisburg) Dec 6-3
- 170 – Gabe Shireman (Girard) over Jacob Briley

(Louisburg) Fall 2:44

- 170 – Jacob Briley (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

182 Results

Aiden Barker of Louisburg went 4-1

- 182 – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) over Ruben Tinajero (Royal Valley) Fall 0:35
- 182 – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 182 – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 182 – Cameron Robinson (Turner) over Aiden Barker (Louisburg) Fall 2:47
- 182 – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) over Nate Criqui (Eudora) Fall 3:08

195 Results

Johnathan Keegan-Childs of Louisburg went 3-2

- 195 – Aaron Hicks (Eudora) over Johnathan Keegan-Childs (Louisburg) Fall 1:00
- 195 – Johnathan Keegan-Childs (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 195 – Johnathan Keegan-Childs (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 195 – Johnathan Keegan-Childs (Louisburg) over Josh Boore (Girard) Fall 2:22
- 195 – Tyler Phillips (Turner) over Johnathan Keegan-Childs (Louisburg) Dec 14-10

220 Results

Alec Younggren of Louisburg went 5-0

- 220 – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

- 220 – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 220 – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 220 – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) over Arrick Williamson (Girard) Fall 1:23
- 220 – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) over Mechia Marks (Turner) Fall 1:14

285 Results

Elijah Eslinger of Louisburg went 4-1

- 285 – Ashton Wood (Royal Valley) over Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) Fall 5:55
- 285 – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 285 – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) over Dee Wideman (Girard) Fall 1:53
- 285 – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- 285 – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) over Branden Gregory (Eudora) Fall 1:06

Top Louisburg Sports Stories of 2020



There hasn't been a year like 2020, and for most people, they are ready to put it behind them and forget it ever existed.

Still, with all the challenges that 2020 brought, there were still plenty of positives to talk about when it came to Louisburg High School sports. History-making state places and state medals were plentiful on this list, but it wasn't all positive. Louisburg had to say goodbye to a beloved town figure and athletes had to deal with the loss of spring sports.

Below are the top stories from 2020, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the explanation is the link to the actual story from the event.

When putting the list together, I took a lot of things into account – whether it was team vs. individual, popularity of the sport, historical achievements and the interest it drew on the web site. Thanks to the cancellation of spring sports, I don't have the top 10 like I normally do, but I got close.

This year was a blast to cover, when I had the opportunity, anyway. Still, I am looking forward to what 2021 will bring. Thank you for everyone's support and can't wait for it all to begin again.



8. Ratliff-Becher wins state powerlifting title

After winning a state championship in 2019 Reilly Ratliff-Becher had every intention of backing up her performance during the Class 4A State Powerlifting Championships on March 7 at Piper High School.

In fact, the Louisburg senior wanted to improve it. Last

season, Ratliff-Becher took first in everything but squat, which she got runner-up.

This time around, she got the clean sweep.

Ratliff-Becher took first in bench, squat and clean and that led to her second straight state championship in the 180-pound class.

"It means a lot to me that I was able to win the state title again," Ratliff-Becher said. "I set a goal for myself to win first in everything since I had got second in squat last year and I achieved it. Even though it wasn't my best showing with the numbers I got on my lifts.

"The competition was very good this year, as it always is. But, fortunately with all the work I put in to at least maintain my numbers from last year, meant I was able to lift bigger amounts than my competition."



7. Conley named state and midwest coach of the year

After a third place finish to end the year, Louisburg boys

soccer coach Kyle Conley was recognized among the state's best.

Conley was named as the Class 4-1A Coach of the Year by the Kansas Soccer Coaches Association in November.

He guided the Wildcats to a 16-2 record on the season and the team's highest finish in program history when Louisburg ousted Rose Hill, 3-0, in the state third-place game.

Just a few weeks later, Conley was honored once again – this time on the girls' side.

Despite the lost season, the United Soccer Coaches wanted to recognize coaches for their past accomplishments and for what this past spring was supposed to hold.

Atop that list was Conley as he was named as the Small School Midwest Coach of the Year.

"I am absolutely honored to receive this award," Conley said. "There are so many great coaches in the Midwest, but to me this is a program award. None of this is possible without everyone involved; girls coming to work their tails off everyday, parents traveling and supporting us anywhere and everywhere, community helping with supporting the program, the school supporting the girls, etc. Without the support and buy in from the girls, parents and community none of this is possible."

The Wildcat girls program has had a successful start in its four years. Conley has a 54-22-2 record during that span, that included two state runner-ups and another state final four appearance.



6. Louisburg cheer places third at state

The Louisburg cheer squad had to do its postseason competition a little different this year thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It didn't seem to bother them much as the defending state champions found themselves right in the thick of things again.

Although they didn't repeat as champs, they were still among the state's best as the Wildcats cheerleaders finished third in the state back in November.

Unlike performing in front of judges like they did in 2019, the Wildcats had to video tape their performance and send it in to be judged. It fared well as they tallied 83.35 points to finish in the top 3.

Baldwin earned the state title with 88.85 points and Abilene was second with 85.25.

Members of the Louisburg cheer squad are Bella Feikert, Addison Drake, Brooklyn Harmon, Jayden Trester, Maddy Carpenter-Ross, Sophie Katzer, Sammy McDaniel, Julia Arriola, Andrea Gaza, JoJo Hendrickson, Sydney Dudzik, Abby Bradley, Anna Poe, Sienna Finch, Mable Graham, Audrey Anderson, Zoe Weers, Anna Morrison and Maggie Madison



5. Holtzen, Owens earn state medals for Wildcat wrestling

Ryan Owens and Cade Holtzen both had their own agendas going into the state wrestling tournament.

Owens, qualified for state last year, but left without a win and he vowed to fix that this time around. As for Holtzen, he came up short in his efforts for a second state medal as a

sophomore last season and had all the motivation not to come home empty-handed again.

Both wrestlers more than made up for their rough patches a year ago.

Owens and Holtzen left Salina with a state medal during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships on Friday and Saturday at the Tony's Pizza Events Center.



Owens made it to the semifinals and wound up earning a fourth-place medal at 120 pounds, while Holtzen finished fifth at 126 pounds.

It also marked the first time since 2016 that Louisburg finished the season with multiple state medalists, when Nathan Keegan and Mason Koechner each brought home medals.

The Wildcats nearly had three medalists as sophomore Brandon Doles finished one win shy of a state medal at 160 pounds with a 2-2 record.



4. Dennis steps down as LHS team doctor

Almost every day of the week, if you were looking for Damon Dennis, he could be found at his office on 11 S. Broadway St., helping treat those pesky aches and pains, taking X-rays, or mending those beaten up athletes after a game.

Doc D – as he his affectionately known – opened Louisburg Chiropractic Office 28 years ago and has served as the

Louisburg High School athletic team doctor for almost that same amount of time.

Dennis has seen it all. The walls in his office are lined with mementos from his years of service to both the community and the high school.

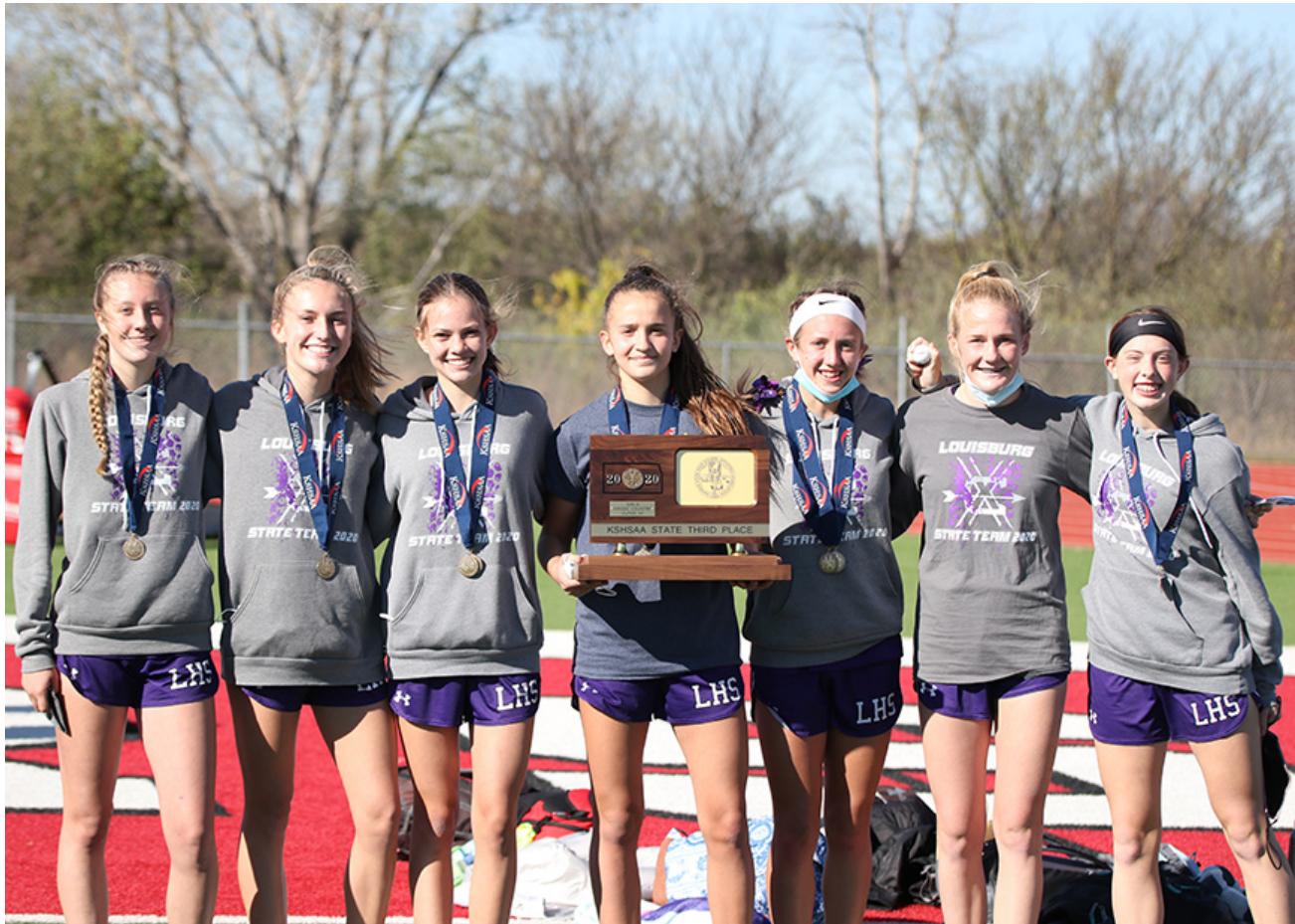
He has taped thousands of ankles, seen even more patients and has touched many lives during his time in Louisburg. That is why this week is one of the more emotional times in his life.

In May, he left Louisburg Chiropractic Office and handed the reins over to Dr. Jake Polzin. Add to that, Dennis also stepped away as LHS' team doctor and left an absence on the sidelines and behind the mic that many in Louisburg have come to know.

"My decision to step down and sell the practice has turned out to be the hardest thing I have ever done," Dennis said. "I have poured everything I have into my job and community. It has become my entire existence. I was taught from a young age to serve others and your community. I feel like the pressures I have put on myself have become unhealthy. I have put about 40 years work in to 28 and feel like there is never going to be a good time to make such a huge life change.

"That being said, I feel like I need to make changes while I am still able to do the things that will be best for my family. Dr. Polzin came along and I think he will carry on the work at the office wonderfully. We are a lot alike in many ways. I could not have found anyone better to replace me."

For many, Dennis has been a big part of people's lives, especially in the athletic arena. He has served as the LHS team doctor since 1992 and has treated many athletes in those 28 years.



3. Girls Cross Country Takes Third at State

For 23 years, the Louisburg cross country program has been chasing a top three finish at the Class 4A meet.

The Wildcats have had several teams qualify, especially in the last few seasons, but have always come up short of their goal. Following Saturday's race in Wamego, the Wildcats can finally stop running after it.

The Louisburg girls put together an historic performance at the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships at Wamego Country Club. The Lady Cats earned a state plaque with a third place finish as they surpassed Buhler by eight points to record the school's first top three state finish.

Junior Reese Johnson, sophomores Claire Brown, Bree Gassman and Nova Ptacek, along with freshmen Lola Edwards, Maddy Rhamy and Erin Apple, will all go down in school history as they became the first Wildcat team to bring home state hardware.

"It means the world to me to be a part of the first team ever to place at state," Rhamy said. "Coming into the state meet, I was just hoping our team would be in the top half, so you could imagine my excitement when our team placed third. I didn't even know we made school history until our coaches told us."

Rhamy was one of two freshmen who earned top 10 finishes individually, along with Edwards. Rhamy finished eighth overall in 20 minutes and 58 seconds, while Edwards was right behind her in 10th in 21:02.

Junior Reese Johnson also garnered a state medal as she was 15th in 21:28 to help the Lady Cats to an historic performance.

It was a proud moment for many in the Louisburg program, and included in that is John Reece. The longtime Wildcat head coach was all smiles following his team's performance.

"It is 23 years the making," coach Reece said. "You always have the plans and goals to get to state and then you get a group to go to state and do something great. This year was one of those. With the Frontier League as tough as it is, and then getting third there, put it in our heads that maybe we could do this. They all went out and ran their races, and that just shows their grit and determination and who they are."

A week earlier, the Wildcats also made history as it was the first time in school history when they qualified the entire boys team to the state meet as they took third at regionals.



2. Boys Soccer Finishes Runner-Up At State

As the Louisburg players huddled around their state plaque, many of them looked at it in awe and wonder.

“Hey guys, we won this,” a player shouted.

The statement was obvious at the time, but nonetheless, their excitement was more than warranted.

For the first time in program history, the Louisburg boys soccer team brought home a plaque from the state final four as the Wildcats defeated Rose Hill, 3-0, on Saturday in the third place match of the Class 4-1A state tournament at Stryker Sports Complex in Wichita.

It was only the second time in school history that the Wildcats had it made it this far, with the other being in 2016, when they finished fourth.

"There are only six teams in the entire state that get to end their year with a win and we wanted to be one of those teams," Louisburg coach Kyle Conley said. "We want to be able to hang up a banner on our field and we wanted a plaque so that no one can forget what these kids earned and what they did this season. I am so proud of all of them."

It was a program defining moment for the Wildcats as they began the weekend searching for a state championship, but lost 2-0 to Bishop Miege on Friday in the semifinals. Still, recording the best finish in school history is nothing for someone to hang their head about, and the Wildcats came out Saturday wanting to make sure they brought some hardware home.

"It's absolutely crazy to think about what we have accomplished this year, partly because I have only played soccer in high school," senior captain Logan Faulkner said. "Bringing a state plaque back will just be a reminder of what we did and how we reached our goal."



1. COVID-19 Cancels Spring Sports

In March, Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly closed all schools for the rest of the 2019-20 school year due to the spread of COVID-19.

When most students hear school has been closed, especially in the winter, cheers erupt. In this case, however, the tone was much more somber – especially among the senior class.

Proms were canceled. Any plans they had for a graduation ceremony were put on hold, and for more than 30 seniors, their last opportunity at playing a sport at Louisburg High School was taken away.

In fact, close to 200 students were planning on participating in an activity in the spring, but with no school, the Kansas State High School Activities Association followed suit and canceled the spring season the day after Gov. Kelly's declaration.

Students, parents and coaches alike have had to come to grips that a season they had been looking forward to all year, was never going to happen. Tears flowed, walls were punched in frustration and some were left speechless.

There would be no game days, no Senior Nights and no postseason runs. Athletes had to figure out how to cope with this fact and it was a challenge for the Louisburg girls soccer, track and field, baseball, softball, golf and swim teams.

Many of those teams had big postseason aspirations after success in 2019 and were left wondering what could have been.

Week 3 Athlete of the Week: Alec Younggren



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

ALEC YOUNGGREN, WRESTLING, SENIOR

Louisburg senior Alec Younggren has already made a big impact in his first year with the Wildcat wrestling program. Last Saturday, Younggren won the 220-pound division of the Randy Starcher Memorial Tournament in Tonganoxie.

Younggren, who is currently ranked No. 2 in Class 4A at 220 pounds, is currently 12-0 on the season and has recorded nine pins.

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

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Younggren wins title at Tonganoxie; Owens, Holtzen runner-up



Senior Ryan Owens works for some back points during a match Thursday at Spring Hill High School.

TONGANOXIE – It was a busy week for the Louisburg wrestling team as the Wildcats took part in three different competitions last week.

Louisburg started with duals against Olathe West, Bonner Springs and Spring Hill and went 1-2. However, the competition heated up even more Saturday when Louisburg competed in the Randy Starcher Memorial at Tonganoxie High School.

Three Wildcats found themselves in the finals and Louisburg

had five wrestlers overall that took a top four finish. In the team standings, Louisburg was sixth with 93 points and Shawnee Heights took first with 202.

Senior Alec Younggren won the 220-pound title with a pin of Eudora's Devon Moncrief and then captured a 12-1 major decision over Shawnee Heights' Garrett Perry in the title match. Perry was a state qualifier a year ago and Younggren, who is currently No. 2 in 4A, is still perfect with a 12-0 record.

Seniors Ryan Owens (120 pounds) and Cade Holtzen (126) also advanced to the championship round, but lost to a pair of state-ranked opponents.

Owens, who entered the match with a 12-0 record, won his first three with two technical falls and a pin. He matched up with Shawnee Heights' Brock Ferguson in the championship round, but was pinned in the third period.

As for Holtzen, he posted a 13-0 record after three straight pins put him in the finals against the defending state champion, Grayson Sonntag, of Tonganoxie. Holtzen lost the match by a 6-1 decision.

In the heavyweight division, sophomore Elijah Eslinger ended his day on a good note as he finished third after he pinned Tonganoxie's Cooper Jones. He finished the day 2-1

Junior Aiden Barker (182) also found himself wrestling for third, but was pinned by Platte County's Jake Fernandez and ended the tournament 2-2 record.

Senior Jarrett Hoyle (145) finished fifth, while freshman Noah Cotter (106), sophomore Brett Rangel (152) and junior Johnathan Keegan-Childs (195) was sixth. Sophomore Kaven Bartlett (132) was seventh and senior Jacob Briley (170) took eighth.



Cade Holtzen (right) gives teammate Kaven Bartlett some words of encouragement during his match Thursday against Bonner Springs.

"We had some great things happen at Tonganoxie," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Looking past the team score, I'm very happy with our performance. Elijah Eslinger is really figuring things out at 285. He went 2-1 with two pins to finish third. Ryan Owens lost by pin at 120, but the match was closer than the result suggests. His opponent, who took 3rd in 5A last year, caught him in a wicked headlock, but up until that point, Ryan was scraping with him pretty well.

"Cade dropped a decision against the returning 4A state champ. It was a tough match, but he's going to see that guy many more times. Because of how KSHSAA has restructured the post season, we're likely going to see Tonganoxie quite a bit before state. Aiden Barker went 2-2 and one of his wins was against a 4A

state qualifier. In the 3rd place match, he was dominating his Platte County opponent, but got caught after a little mistake."

On Wednesday, Louisburg hosted Olathe West in its home opener for a dual, and despite giving up some points, the Wildcats made it close, but fell 48-36 against their Class 6A opponent.

The Wildcats also had some exhibition matches against Osawatomie and Holtzen got himself a big win. Holtzen bumped up a weight class to face off with No. 3 Chance Mitzner of Osawatomie and got the 6-3 decision.

Holtzen, along with Bartlett, freshman Traden Noll (138) and Younggren, picked up two wins on the night. Owens and Barker also won a match.

The next day, Louisburg traveled to Spring Hill for a double dual with Bonner Springs and the Wildcats left with a 1-1 record. Louisburg defeated Bonner Springs, 48-33, and came up short against Spring Hill, 45-36.



Junior Bailey Hallas works for a pin Thursday against her Spring Hill opponent.

It was against Spring Hill where Louisburg junior Bailey Hallas picked up her first win of the season for the Wildcat girls team as she won by pin. Amber Pritchett also wrestled for the Louisburg girls.

Louisburg is now on winter moratorium and won't be able to get back to the practice room until Jan. 5 and will have four days to get ready for its home tournament on Jan. 9.

Bovaird has liked what he has seen from his team so far and is looking forward to the rest of the season.

"We're at the point where I'm constantly reiterating to the guys that we need to quit looking at records and wins / losses," Bovaird said. "This part of the season is when we focus on growth. Every year, the wrestlers who keep the growth

mindset and build from each match are the ones who get revenge wins and get far at state. That's our goal – relentlessly pursuing improvement."

Wildcats fall in a pair of duals to Basehor and Free State



BASEHOR – The competition level for the Louisburg wrestling team rose Friday as the Wildcats squared off with a pair of bigger schools in Basehor-Linwood and Lawrence Free State.

As it turned out, two opens in each dual hurt the Wildcats' chances of winning either one.

Louisburg fell to Basehor-Linwood 45-33 and also lost to Lawrence Free State, 46-33. The Wildcats gave up 12 points in each dual with those opens and had to play catch up.

"That always makes it tough to bring out a team victory," Louisburg coach Bobby Boviard said. "Both Free State and Basehor-Linwood are tough teams. I know their coaches pretty well and they've built some solid programs with lots of young hammers coming up. We stepped out against a 5A and a 6A school, and I love how our guys competed."

Four wrestlers won both of their matches on the day and leading the way were seniors Alec Younggren and Cade Holtzen.

Younggren, who is ranked No. 2 in the state at 220 pounds, won both of his matches by pin. Holtzen, who is No. 5 in the state at 126 pounds, did the same.

Senior Ryan Owens, who is currently ranked No. 5 at 120 pounds, won a close 4-3 decision against Lawrence Free State and also won by forfeit.

Junior Aiden Barker (182) was 2-0 with a pin and a forfeit as well. Kaven Bartlett (132), Jacob Briley (170) and Johnathan Keegan-Childs (195) each went 1-1 on the evening.

"Kaven is in a tough weight class, but I love seeing how he battles with his opponents," Bovaird said. "Barker is making some big strides as a junior and wrestling tough at his weight. Briley is getting a chance to compete in his own weight class, which has given him a chance to show what he can do. As a freshman and a sophomore, he had bumped up to fill an empty weight class."

It will be a busy week for the Wildcats as they will compete on three different occasions this week. It begins tonight when they host Olathe West for a dual at 6 p.m.

Louisburg will then travel to Spring Hill on Thursday for a dual competition and will do the same at Tonganoxie on Saturday.

"The motto we're using this year is "Relentless," and that's what they're figuring out," Bovaird said. "With a season like this one, we've got to be relentless. It's a matter of being tough and fighting for bonus points in duals. We don't have a traditional tournament until regionals, and we should have close to 30 duals this season. If we don't learn to be relentless in every match, and we give up lots of pins, we're going to be on the short of of the team score. The crucial

thing is that we need to fight for points and pins, and we need to fight off our backs and refuse to give up the pin in these matches."