

Louisburg wrestling takes third at Fort Scott to open season



Senior Kyle Allen works for a pin during Louisburg's dual with Blue Valley Southwest on Saturday during the Fort Scott Dual Tournament. The Wildcats finished third overall.

FORT SCOTT – The Fort Scott Dual Tournament had all the signs of a season opener for the Louisburg High School wrestling team.

It had its fair share of highs and lows and it gave head coach Bobby Bovaird a good idea of what his team needed to work on. Still, the tournament gave Bovaird plenty to be excited about for the rest of the season.

Louisburg finished third overall with a 3-2 record and it had a chance to finish in tie for first going into its final dual. It was a performance the Wildcat wrestlers will look to build off of moving forward.

“For it being our first meet of the season, it wasn’t too bad,” Bovaird said. “I’m not satisfied, and the guys aren’t either. Several came up to me after the meet saying they felt like they needed more live conditioning. To be honest, they didn’t look that out-of-shape during their matches. For the most part, we kept our stances, our positioning, and looked

relatively sharp. It's great that they have that sort of self-criticism – they want to work harder, they want to push themselves. It's not going to be me driving them, they can drive themselves."

Along with the team success, the Wildcats had several individuals who put together a strong performance.

Senior Ryan Adams, who is currently ranked No. 1 in the state at 145 pounds, moved up to wrestle at 152 pounds and ended the day with a 5-0 record, including three by pin and another by technical fall.



Senior Ryan Adams gets some back points during his 152-pound match against Shawnee Mission West.

Junior Austin Moore followed suit at 195 pounds as he finished the day 5-0, four of which came by pin. Moore is currently ranked No. 6 in the state at 195 pounds.

"I'm excited for both of these guys and what they can do this season," Bovaird said. "Ryan looks like he's back on track after sitting out his sophomore year with his elbow surgery. Last year was a solid year, but he's having a great start to this season. He's even wrestling up a weight at 152 to start out the season. He's back to his old confidence with his leg riding.

"Austin is a beast, and I think he's going to make a great run for a state title this season. With his work ethic and strength, he'll have his hand raised quite a bit this season. With Austin, you'll see solid wrestling – level changes on his shots, pressure on top and a whole lot of strength behind everything he hits."

Junior Hunter Bindi and freshman Cade Holtzen came in and split time between 113 and 120 pounds to help bolster the Wildcat lineup and they did their job. Both wrestlers finished with a 4-1 record and each had two pins. Bindi's lone loss came against Paola's Preston Martin, a defending state champion and No. 1-ranked wrestler at 113 pounds.

Blue Caplinger also finished with a 4-1 record at 160 pounds as the Louisburg junior's lone loss came in overtime of a scoreless match. Caplinger also finished with two pins and a major decision.

Senior Tucker Batten (145 pounds) and junior Gabriel Bonham (132) also finished with 4-1 records, while seniors Thad Hendrix (106) and Kyle Allen (126) ended the day with a 3-2 mark.



Senior Austin Moore works for one of his four pins Saturday during the Fort Scott Dual Tournament.

“Our newcomers in Gabriel and Cade really had some good matches,” Bovaird said. “I think their losses were winnable matches, so with film analysis and purposeful practicing, they can make that happen. Blue lost a nail-biter in overtime against an Anderson County opponent. He had some great positioning in that match. It’s pretty rare to have a match go 0-0 into overtime.

“I’m seeing some great action from Thad on his feet – some of the best neutral wrestling I’ve seen from him. Kyle ran into a couple tough opponents, but he really only had a week of practice after getting his wisdom teeth out the first week of the season.

“Hunter had a strong return for us this season at 113 and 120. He and Cade were both certified at 113, so that gave us the

option to switch them between 113 and 120 to give us a stronger lineup. His lone loss on the weekend was to the defending state champ from Paola. That match will have a different result next time out.”

Louisburg opened the tournament with a difficult 36-34 loss to Blue Valley Southwest, but responded nicely with three consecutive victories.

The Wildcats rolled Fort Scott, 72-9, and then followed that up with 60-18 and 51-27 victories over Shawnee Mission West and Anderson County, respectively.

That set up a final dual with rival Paola and victory would have put the Wildcats in a tie for first place with Paola and Blue Valley Southwest. After losing the first five matches of the dual, Louisburg battled back to win the next four, but came up short in a 46-27 loss.

“Paola is tough,” Bovaird said. “They really looked on-point this weekend, and I knew coming into this season that they would be contending for a league title. Later in the year, when we see them at league, it will be a different story. By that point, it will be a matter of who’s endured the toughness and adversities of this sport. Some of those matches that went against us will be key rematches. I’m not sure how the tie-breaker would have worked out if we had beaten Paola, though. I just know we got out-wrestled against BVSU and Paola.”

Louisburg returns to action this Friday when it travels to the December Duals tournament at Prairie View High School. The Wildcats will go up against Baldwin, Prairie View, Burlington, Independence and Royal Valley – all Class 4A schools. The tournament is set to begin at 4 p.m.

FORT SCOTT DUAL RESULTS

Louisburg defeated Fort Scott 72-9

106 – Thad Hendrix (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

113 – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) over Corbin Shelden (Fort Scott) Fall 0:38

120 – Hunter Bindi (Louisburg) over Daevin Caldwell (Fort Scott) Fall 1:22

126 – Kyle Montojo (Fort Scott) over Kyle Allen (Louisburg) Dec 11-5

132 – Gabriel Bonham (Louisburg) over Will Wunderly (Fort Scott) Fall 0:49

138 – Dalton Hilt (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

145 – Tucker Batten (Louisburg) over Jon Daniels (Fort Scott) Fall 1:16

152 – Ryan Adams (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

160 – Blue Caplinger (Louisburg) over Logan Hall (Fort Scott) Fall 3:37

170 – Jacob Cowell (Louisburg) over Nick Farrington (Fort Scott) Fall 1:08

182 – Garrett Caldwell (Louisburg) over Kaden Primm (Fort Scott) Fall 0:17

195 – Austin Moore (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

220 – Sam Kratochvil (Louisburg) over Grayson Quick (Fort Scott) Fall 2:22

285 – Ben Daniels (Fort Scott) over Hunter Day (Louisburg) Fall 0:44

Louisburg defeated Shawnee Mission West 60-18

106 – Thad Hendrix (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

113 – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

120 – Hunter Bindi (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

126 – Kyle Allen (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

132 – Gabriel Bonham (Louisburg) over Christian Wyatt (Shawnee Mission West) Dec 7-6

138 – Dalton Hilt (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

145 – Tucker Batten (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

152 – Ryan Adams (Louisburg) over Richard Waeltermann (Shawnee Mission West) TF 16-0

160 – Blue Caplinger (Louisburg) over Jacob Porrit (Shawnee Mission West) Maj 15-5
170 – Danny Sublette (Shawnee Mission West) over Jacob Cowell (Louisburg) Fall 0:58
182 – Aiden Deckert (Shawnee Mission West) over Garrett Caldwell (Louisburg) Fall 1:45
195 – Austin Moore (Louisburg) over Hunter Remigio (Shawnee Mission West) Fall 0:58
220 – Sam Kratochvil (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
285 – Byron Sherwin (Shawnee Mission West) over Hunter Day (Louisburg) Fall 1:26

Louisburg defeated Anderson County 51-27

106 – Thad Hendrix (Louisburg) over Carter Sommer (Anderson County) Fall 0:15
113 – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) over Ashton Miller (Anderson County) Fall 1:53
120 – Hunter Bindi (Louisburg) over Ryland Wright (Anderson County) Fall 0:49
126 – Kyle Allen (Louisburg) over Tyler Secrest (Anderson County) Fall 1:57
132 – Gabriel Bonham (Louisburg) over Dominic Ireland (Anderson County) Dec 10-3
138 – Gavin Wolken (Anderson County) over Dalton Hilt (Louisburg) Fall 1:36
145 – Tucker Batten (Louisburg) over Lane Freeman (Anderson County) Fall 1:00
152 – Ryan Adams (Louisburg) over Cole Denny (Anderson County) Fall 2:29
160 – Dalton Duke (Anderson County) over Blue Caplinger (Louisburg) SV-1 2-0
170 – Dominic Sutton (Anderson County) over Jacob Cowell (Louisburg) Fall 1:49
182 – Logan Allen (Anderson County) over Garrett Caldwell (Louisburg) Fall 1:24
195 – Austin Moore (Louisburg) over Isaiah Levy (Anderson

County) Fall 0:22

220 – Dallas Higginbotham (Anderson County) over Sam Kratochvil (Louisburg) Fall 2:11

285 – Hunter Day (Louisburg) over Raven Maley (Anderson County) Fall 0:26

Blue Valley Southwest defeated Louisburg 36-34

106 – Daniel McMullen (Blue Valley Southwest) over Thad Hendrix (Louisburg) Fall 2:56

113 – Hunter Bindi (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf

120 – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) over Wyatt Driskell (Blue Valley Southwest) SV-1 8-6

126 – Kyle Allen (Louisburg) over Luke Richardson (Blue Valley Southwest) Fall 2:29

132 – Gabriel Bonham (Louisburg) over Devin Williams (Blue Valley Southwest) Maj 13-3

138 – Keenan Wade (Blue Valley Southwest) over Dalton Hilt (Louisburg) Fall 0:33

145 – Jackson McCall (Blue Valley Southwest) over Tucker Batten (Louisburg) SV-1 10-8

152 – Ryan Adams (Louisburg) over Charles Vath (Blue Valley Southwest) Fall 1:03

160 – Blue Caplinger (Louisburg) over Drew Hill (Blue Valley Southwest) Dec 5-0

170 – Nick Arend (Blue Valley Southwest) over Jacob Cowell (Louisburg) Fall 1:27

182 – Aaron Campbell (Blue Valley Southwest) over Garrett Caldwell (Louisburg) Fall 1:32

195 – Austin Moore (Louisburg) over Jaren Williams (Blue Valley Southwest) Fall 4:28

220 – Evan Ludwig (Blue Valley Southwest) over Sam Kratochvil (Louisburg) Fall 0:47

285 – Kyle Murphy (Blue Valley Southwest) over Hunter Day (Louisburg) Dec 7-1

Paola defeated Louisburg 46-27

106 – Jordyn Knecht (Paola) over Thad Hendrix (Louisburg) Maj

13-5

113 – Preston Martin (Paola) over Hunter Bindi (Louisburg)
Fall 4:48

120 – Noah Bowden (Paola) over Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) Dec
5-2

126 – Michael Searcy (Paola) over Kyle Allen (Louisburg) Dec
7-1

132 – Bre Douglas (Paola) over Gabriel Bonham (Louisburg)
Fall 0:57

138 – Dalton Hilt (Louisburg) over Corey Holub (Paola) Fall
2:40

145 – Tucker Batten (Louisburg) over Brendan Ohlmeier (Paola)
Dec 8-7

152 – Ryan Adams (Louisburg) over Matthew Bevis (Paola) Fall
0:32

160 – Blue Caplinger (Louisburg) over Dylan Newton (Paola)
Fall 0:33

170 – Aaron Maxwell (Paola) over Jacob Cowell (Louisburg)
Fall 2:40

182 – Mikey Stribling (Paola) over Garrett Caldwell
(Louisburg) Fall 1:31

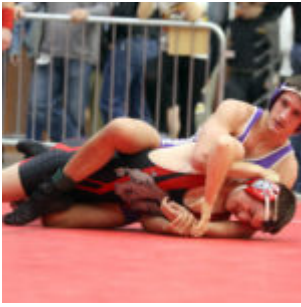
195 – Austin Moore (Louisburg) over Jeffery Schartz (Paola)
Fall 0:47

220 – Blake Batchelder (Paola) over Sam Kratochvil
(Louisburg) Fall 0:29

285 – Jake Miller (Paola) over Hunter Day (Louisburg) Fall
0:33

Louisburg wrestling hopes for

another big season



Louisburg senior Ryan Adams captured a state medal for the Wildcats last season after he finished sixth at 138 pounds. Adams is one of five returning state qualifiers for Louisburg and is currently ranked No. 2 in the state.

There haven't been many seasons like the one the Louisburg High School wrestling team had last year – only two to be exact.

The Wildcats qualified eight for the Class 4A state tournament, which tied a school record that was set back in 1984. Louisburg didn't have quite the success it was hoping for when it reached Salina as it picked up just one state medal.

However, the Wildcats are ready to make another run at it. Louisburg returns five state qualifiers for the 2017-18 campaign and it is excited about what the possibilities hold for this season.

"Practices have been going well, for the most part," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "There are the start-of-the-season snags, but the guys are doing well getting back into the swing of things. We've got 31 wrestlers out this year, and I'm especially excited with all the experience they're bringing back to the mats.

"We graduated eight seniors from last year, and most of them

were varsity. We do have a good number of younger wrestlers coming in with some pretty good kids wrestling experience. The last few years, we've been extra strong in the upper weights, but this year it's looking like our lower weights will be pretty strong, too."

The coaches around the state seem to think the Wildcats will have their fair share of success as well. Louisburg is currently No. 8 in the Kansas Wrestling Coaches Association Class 4A team rankings and the Wildcats have four state-ranked wrestlers.

Senior Ryan Adams captured his first state medal last year at 138 pounds and is looking to do more of the season this season. Adams plans to stay at 138 pounds and lead a group of talented lower-weight wrestlers. He is currently ranked No. 2 in the state in his weight class.

"Ryan has been wrestling from a very young age, and I've known him as long as I've been in Louisburg," Bovaird said. "I'm pretty excited to see what he can do to wrap up his wrestling career. He's been a regular fixture in off-season wrestling. The last two years that we had our 'Ironman' program, he was one of the winners. He's sitting in a good position here at the start of the season, but we'll have to see how things work out as the season progresses."



Louisburg junior Austin Moore is currently ranked No. 5 in Class 4A at 195 pounds and is a returning state qualifier.

Louisburg also returns another state medalist, even though he didn't win one for the Wildcats. Junior Hunter Bindi returns to the Wildcat program after wrestling for a year at St. Thomas Aquinas.

At the Class 5A tournament last season, Bindi finished fifth at 106 pounds for Aquinas. He wrestled for Louisburg his freshman year, missing out on a state medal by one match.

Bindi, who is currently ranked No. 4 at 120 pounds in Class 4A, is expected to give the Wildcats another threat at a state medal this season. It hasn't been decided yet on if he will wrestler at 113 or 120.

"Hunter's more focused than I've ever seen him, and I love his

attitude,” Bovaird said. “He wants to get mat-time, and he wants to face the challenges in front of him. He’ll be able to be a contender for the state championship this season, that’s for sure.”

The Wildcats return three other state qualifiers in seniors Thad Hendrix (106 pounds) and Kyle Allen (126), along with junior Austin Moore (195). Moore is currently ranked No. 5 in the state at 195 pounds as he makes the leap from 170 pounds.

Seniors Tucker Batten (145) and Garrett Caldwell (182) join junior Blue Caplinger (160) as three others who are returning varsity wrestlers and Bovaird is expecting each of them to show improvement from a year ago.

“Austin has put in the work in the weight room, and he’s coming off an awesome football season,” Bovaird said. “He’ll be able to do some damage this season. We have a bunch of wrestlers who are ready to take the next step.”



Senior Thad Hendrix, who qualified for state last season at 106 pounds, will try for his first state medal.

Louisburg also has a few new varsity wrestlers that hope to make impacts as well. Freshman Cade Holtzen will wrestle at either 113 or 120 pounds for the Wildcats and has had a lot of success at the kids wrestling level.

Gabriel Bonham, a transfer from Gardner-Edgerton, will give the Wildcats more depth at the lower weights as he will wrestle at 132 pounds. Freshman Ben Wiedenmann will fill the 152 pound spot and sophomore Jacob Cowell will slot in at 170 pounds.

Sophomore Sam Kratochvil and junior Hunter Day will take the 220 and 285-pound slots, respectively.

"Top to bottom, our line-up is looking pretty solid," Bovaird said. "We're a little thin in the upper weights with only one

kid at 220 and one at 285. Try as we may, we haven't been able to convince the big football players in the school that wrestling will benefit them greatly on the football field."

Louisburg will get its season started Saturday when it competes in the Fort Scott Dual Tournament. Matches are set to begin at 9 a.m.

Photo gallery: Purple-White Wrestling Scrimmage



Senior Garrett Caldwell works for a a pin during tonight's Purple-White Scrimmage at Louisburg High School.

The Louisburg High School wrestling team had a tune-up tonight before the start of its regular season. The Wildcats held their annual Purple-White Scrimmage in front of several fans at LHS.

Louisburg returns five state qualifiers from last season and the Wildcats will open their season Saturday when they travel to Fort Scott for a dual tournament. Also, look out for preview story on the Wildcats' season later this week.

Here are some pictures from tonight's event. Best of luck this

season to all the wrestlers.













































KSHSAA releases 2017-18 classifications



The Kansas High School Activities Association released the classifications for the 2017-18 season on Tuesday morning, and for Louisburg High School, much remains the same.

The Wildcats are currently a Class 4A-Division I program with 532 students, but after this season the classification system will change. Class 4A will get rid of the divisions and 4A will have just 36 schools. Louisburg is still expected to be in 4A for the foreseeable future.

However, several schools across the state made classification

Bonner Springs (762) and Arkansas City (757).

Sub-state and regional assignments for the fall season will be released in the coming days.

Holloway excited for new role as LHS activities director



Louisburg High School activities director Jeremy Holloway is looking forward to his new position as he starts his 17th year in the USD 416 school district.

Growing up, Jeremy Holloway wasn't one to stay in a place for too long.

Holloway spent most of his childhood and young adult life moving from place to place. He wasn't the type of person who envisioned himself putting down roots.

"I was a constant migrant," Holloway said.

That was until he moved to Louisburg with his wife Megan. Now instead of a migrant, Holloway is deep-rooted in a town he loves.

It made his decision, almost two months ago, an easy one.

Back in June, Holloway was hired as the new Louisburg High School activities director and assistant principal, following the resignation of former activities director Darin Gagnebin. Holloway, who has spent the last 16 years as a teacher at Louisburg Middle School, is ready for the new challenge.

“I am really looking forward to it,” Holloway said. “I have been here in Louisburg for 17 years. I never lived anywhere for more than four years in my life until I came to Louisburg. I never knew what it was like to be a part of a community and when I got here I just fell in love with the town. I was excited to become a part of it and Louisburg became important to me. The teaching was great and getting to know all the kids and see them grow up all the way through college was fun. Now I see some of my former students teaching in the building here and it is an amazing feeling. It just felt like home to me.”

Fate seemed to step in at the right time for Holloway. He entered the summer still planning to teach history at the middle school, but the dominoes quickly started to fall into place.

Holloway was well on his way to getting his administration degree this past school year as he was planning on holding on to it until something in Louisburg came open. He didn't have to wait long.

“I had to get recertified, so I talked with my wife and I said why get an education masters if it is just going to move me on the pay scale,” he said. “Why not get an administration degree to have options? There are other places near here that are looking for people, but that isn't what I want. The only move I would make is to stay in Louisburg. I happened to be down in Eureka Springs on vacation and I got a text in middle of night that Gagnebin had resigned. I had just got my diploma the day before we left. I applied and it turned out well and hopefully it was a good thing.”

Louisburg USD 416 superintendent Dr. Brian Biermann had to sift through more than 20 different applicants for the job, but he believes Holloway is going to do great things in the position.

“Jeremy has been a loyal and dedicated teacher and coach in our community for 17 years,” Dr. Biermann said. “Jeremy possesses many strong leadership attributes that will allow him to be a strong, instructional leader at Louisburg High School. He is passionate about education, has a strong work ethic and is committed to our community.

“Jeremy is all about building positive relationships with students, staff and the community. For 17 years he has been building these relationships. Now, he will be able to build upon his unique skill set in a leadership position in our district. I am excited to see the great things Mr. Holloway can contribute to our district and community in this new role.”

One of the first things Holloway wanted to do was to get to know his new coaching staff. Several new coaches were hired this past school year and he wanted to see what they were all about.

“I just want them to feel comfortable with me and let them understand that I am approachable,” Holloway said. “That relationship piece is huge. I am getting to know where they are from, how many kids they have and I want them to feel comfortable coming to me. We do lose some great experience, but we have gained some capable coaches and a lot of enthusiasm. I just want to be a positive impact for them.”

Since he started officially on July 24, Holloway has been hard at work in several different areas, but one of the bigger things going on now is the shuffling of the Frontier League.

The league, which will be at seven schools this year, will move up to nine starting for the 2018-19 school year. Bonner

Springs, Tonganoxie and Piper will join the league, while De Soto will depart.

Baldwin, an original league member, is concerned the school will move down to Class 3A starting in 2018-19, thanks to changes in the classification system. If it happens, it will create scheduling conflicts for football.

"The biggest conflict right now is Baldwin is right on the edge of becoming 3A and they think it will happen," Holloway said. "If Baldwin is in our league, which is what we plan on, they are required to play five district games for football, which only leaves them three league games. If only three league teams play Baldwin, then the rest of the league teams have to find another team to play. I have schools from Lansing, Independence, Coffeyville, Chanute and other schools calling me trying to lock up games. There are so many different scenarios so we just have to wait and see. That is one thing that I am really working on right now."

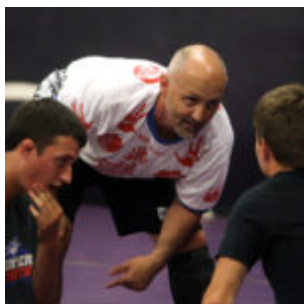
With the activity season fast approaching, Holloway is excited for everything to get underway. He is also looking forward to getting to know the fan base more.

"I have always been highly impressed of Louisburg and the support of its teams and the turnout we will get, especially for football games," Holloway said. "I encourage Louisburg to continue the tradition of being a class act. I think that every town has its own culture and a lot of it starts with the coaches. If your coaches are harassing refs, your players are probably going to start to learn that they can do that and that will trickle down to the parents and crowd. Without pointing fingers, there are certain places where that is the climate. I think Louisburg has been great. There are always going to be situations, but I would encourage fans and parents to support our coaches and let them coach."

"I am looking forward to an exciting year. We have great

coaches, that are experienced and they are very innovative. They are organized and they all seem truly excited about what is going on. The community can rest assured that the coaches that are in place right now have the best interest of the kids and the programs.”

Camp, Sunflower games end successful summer for LHS wrestling



Ottawa University coach Kevin Andres instructs Louisburg seniors Ryan Adams (left) and Tucker Batten during the Wildcat advanced camp on July 13 at Louisburg High School.

When the Louisburg High School wrestling team gathered together for its week-long camp, it was a little different than in year's past.

The camp had a family atmosphere that brought past, present and future Wildcat wrestlers together for a week that began in Louisburg and ended on a mat in Topeka.

Louisburg head coach Bobby Bovaird held a beginners and advanced camp that had approximately 60 wrestlers out between

the two sessions that went from July 10-14.

“I think that it was the biggest one we’ve done since I’ve been at Louisburg,” Bovaird said. “Without a doubt, we had great regular attendance and the support from the youth wrestling club was incredible. At each session, we had plenty of support from the Wildcat Wrestling Club coaches, and it would not have been as successful a camp without them.”

In the advanced session, Bovaird brought in Ottawa University head wrestling coach Kevin Andres to run the five-day camp and work with each of the athletes. Bovaird was happy his wrestlers had the opportunity to learn some new things from the college coach.

“While it was a huge burden taken off my shoulders to have Kevin come and work as our featured clinician, it was even more beneficial to the wrestlers to have the chance to learn from one of the best coaches in the state,” Bovaird said. “He brought in techniques that reinforced what I’ve been showing these last few years, and he also showed the team lots of new trends in the sport. I think the biggest benefit was the introduction of techniques that aligned well with our program’s philosophies as well as collegiate styles.

“I asked Coach Andres to come in and work with leg-riding techniques. Recently, we’ve had several wrestlers wanting to take their leg-riding skills to the next level and to make them more efficient on the mat, and this was a great chance to help them out. Coach Andres also showed some key points with takedowns and top work.”

Many of the Wildcat wrestlers had a chance to take what they learned from the camp and use that to compete in the Sunflower State Games in Topeka on July 15 at the Kansas Expocentre.

Wrestlers – young and old – fared well as several of them finished in the top four of two different competitions. Coaches from the high school and youth programs also entered

the competition to show off some of their skills

In the folkstyle tournament portion, Kaden Allen (10-and-under), Sam Kratochvil (14-U), Ryan Adams (high school), Garrett Caldwell (high school) and Bovaird (19-29-year-old division) each came in first. Bronc Noll (10U), Brayden Yoder (10U), Aiden Barker (14U), Brandon Doles (14U), Brandon Ott (19-29), Scott Ballard (30-39) and Adam Noll (40-49) each finished runner-up.



LHS senior Garrett Caldwell was one of five Louisburg wrestlers to finish first in folkstyle at the Sunflower State Games on July 15 in Topeka.

Owen Ebenstein (8U), Traden Noll (12U), Cade Holtzen (high school), Chris Turner (19-29) and Shea Cox (19-29) took third. Braddock Tharp (8U), Xander Auth (8U), Bo Ballard (8U), Camren Ebenstein (8U), Jay McCaskill (12U), Kyle Allen (high school), Shawn Crossley (19-29) and James Auth (30-39) finished fourth.

Louisburg had four wrestlers take home top honors in the

takedown tournament. Owen Ebenstein, Kaden Allen, McCaskill and Kyle Allen each took first place, while Doles and Holtzen finished runner-up.

Yoder, Barker and Adams came in third overall, while Bo Ballard and Camren Ebenstein brought home a fourth-place medal.

“One of the best things about how we set up camp as a lead-in to the Sunflower State Games was that the boys had a chance to put what they learned to the test,” Bovaird said. “It’s one thing to learn a bunch of things at a camp in the middle of summer, working them on familiar faces. It’s completely different to be able to take these new techniques and experiment with them in live wrestling against unfamiliar opponents, to see what works and what doesn’t. I saw lots of our guys trying these new techniques in their matches at the Sunflower State Games.

“I had a blast getting back on the mat. Every few years, I put my shoes back on to compete, and the older I get, the more I question my sanity when I choose to do this. This year, however, was a pretty good experience. I love the fact that we had so many alumni talking about getting back on the mat, and so many of them followed through. At a tournament like this one, you’ll see a good number of ‘old timers’ getting back on the mat and competing. We had high school coaches, club coaches, recent alumni and wrestlers’ dads give it a go.”



**Eighth-grader Brandon Doles
earned a pair of second-
place honors at the
Sunflower State games.**

It has been a busy summer for the Wildcat wrestlers as they have had the opportunity to participate in several open mat sessions, along with different clinics and camps outside of Louisburg.

Bovaird has tracked his wrestler's participation by offering an Ironman Award, which is given to every wrestler who accumulates 100 points over the summer. The program, which is in its second year, has seen the winners double in size from the year before as the Wildcats had 10 wrestlers earn the honor.

LHS senior Kyle Allen racked up the most points over the summer with 195 and Kaden Allen was second with 184. Cade Holtzen (166), Garrett Caldwell (116), Bo Ballard (105), Brandon Doles (105), Ryan Adams (104), Aiden Barker (100), Collin Hamilton (100) and Nathan Hamilton (100) also earned the award.

"The summers are getting busier than ever before. Kids have baseball, football, other sports camps, family vacations, work and all sorts of obligations. I try to offer several opportunities for them to get back on the mat, even if it is just once a week. The Ironman Award is in its second year, and the guys who won it last summer all made huge strides that were evident this past season – state medalists, state qualifiers, and major improvements. The thing is, they're making efforts to get on the mat. The Ironman Award is an element of positive reinforcement. Instead of punishing the kids who don't come in, I'm trying to reward those who do. There's only so much that I can do to motivate them, however. The true motivation has to come from them. If they want to get their name on a shirt, then so be it. If they want to improve

from last season, even better. The more they wrestle, the better it is for the program and the community.

“Kids have been coming to open mats each week, our team camp, and special clinics I’ve offered. I had several go to other local camps, and we had 16 kids wrestle at the Sunflower State Games. I know that five guys are attending the Penn State camp hosted at Baker, and that will be a great way to wrap up the summer. At the start of August, all the guys who earned at least 100 points will get their names printed on the Ironman Award shirt. It looks like we’re going to have a solid number of names to add, but in the bigger picture, it’s a major investment in our performances next season, whether it’s high school, middle school or club wrestling.”

Opinion: Time to look back and enjoy successes



The Louisburg High School football team was one of many bright spots for LHS athletics this past school year.

We live in a world where, especially in sports, we often don’t take time to reflect on our accomplishments – and instead we are in a rush to move on to the next set of obstacles.

In reality, we are in a “what have you done for me lately” society and sometimes don’t remember, or enjoy, those special moments where our hard work has paid off.

Yes, I understand you don’t want to relish in those accomplishments as that doesn’t make you a better athlete, or whatever your specialty may be, but not taking the time to enjoy the ride can be detrimental.

And what a ride it was for Louisburg High School athletics this past season.

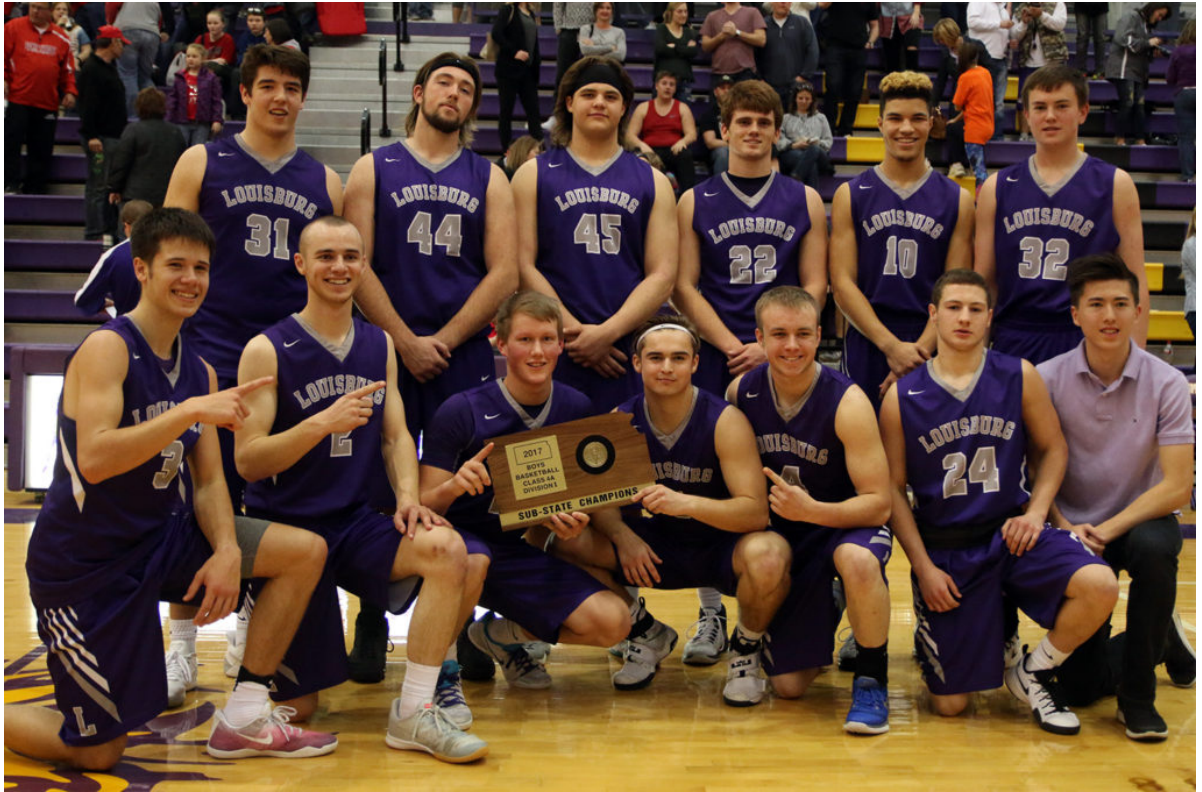
The Wildcats had a special year in several sports, and before we focus on the 2017-18 campaign, we should look back at what the 16-17 season brought us. Just take a look at what these Wildcats accomplished.

- There is probably no better place to start than the Louisburg soccer teams. Both the boys and girls teams earned spots in the state semifinals for the first time in program history and both finished fourth. The boys team made it to state for the first time in their 14 years, while the girls advanced to the state tournament in just their second season.



The Louisburg High School girls soccer team finished fourth in the state in just their second season. The Wildcat boys also finished fourth as they advanced to the state semifinals for the first time in program history.

- It was quite the season for the Wildcat boys basketball team as they advanced to the state tournament for the first time since 2005. Louisburg won its sub-state tournament with a 64-52 win over Fort Scott in the championship game.



The Louisburg boys basketball team qualified for state for the first time since 2005.

- The Louisburg football team made quite the run in the 2016 season. The Wildcats won their first playoff game since 2012 and earned a regional title in the process with a win over Independence. Even though their season came to an end in the next round to eventual state champion Bishop Miege, the Wildcats' still finished with an 8-3 record.
- Wrestling had another big season as the Wildcats qualified eight for the Class 4A state tournament in Salina. Although Ryan Adams was the lone state medalist, as he finished sixth overall at 138 pounds, the Wildcats tied a school record for number of state qualifiers that was set back in 1984.
- In cross country, the Wildcats sent three runners to the state meet and had their first state medalist since 2006 when freshman Trinity Moore finished 19th overall, as she, Wyatt Reece and Tim Smith competed at the Wamego meet. Moore was also the school's first female runner to earn a state medal.

- Freshman golfer Calvin Dillon became the Wildcats' first state medalist in several years as he finished 10th at the Class 4A state tournament and was one of two Wildcats, along with Ty Martin, to qualify for state. Dillon could quite possibly be the first freshman golfer in school history to get a medal, but since golf stats aren't quite as well kept, it is hard to tell for sure.
- T.J. Dover and Isabelle Holtzen came through with state medals of their own following the state track meet. Holtzen finished seventh at the Class 4A meet in the pole vault and Dover was eighth in the discus as both medaled for the first time. Holtzen also broke the school record in the pole vault earlier in the season after she cleared 11 feet, 1 inch.
- The girls basketball and softball teams both had big improvements from a season ago as they each reached 10 wins despite falling in the first round of their sub-state and regional tournaments. Softball doubled their win total from 2016, while the girls basketball team improved by seven victories.
- The Louisburg volleyball team advanced to the sub-state championship game against rival Paola and was just a few points away from advancing to its fifth consecutive state tournament. The Lady Cats also finished the season with 23 victories.

Most schools across the state would love to have the kind of success Louisburg experienced this year and to me that doesn't seem like it is talked about enough.

Sometimes we get caught up in losses or not meeting expectations, when in fact, compared to a lot of schools, Louisburg exceeds expectations – at least it does mine.

Could these programs be better? Sure they could and the coaches would be the first to tell you. At the same time, we all need to take a step back, look at the big picture and enjoy the success we have.

To me, Louisburg athletics is as healthy as it has been in a long time.

A lot has been made about all the coaches that have left recently. Louisburg will have four new head coaches this upcoming school year and several new assistants.

Some people have considered this a mass exodus due problems at the school. It couldn't be further from the truth. A lot of it is just coincidence. For some it was retirement, others wanted to spend more time with family and a few more just wanted a change.

Former activities director Darin Gagenbin left to be closer to his family and work in the town where he lives. I know all about how great of an opportunity that is and it is the same thing I did almost 10 years ago when I moved here with my family. Working in the town you live in is something you can't put a value on.

Louisburg found a great replacement in Jeremy Holloway, who has been with the district for 17 years and is invested in the community. The school has also brought in a lot of new, young coaches that have come in with excitement and new ideas.

It is bittersweet for me as a lot of those coaches I had a chance to get to know really well are now gone. Although I am mainly a solo operation, I consider a lot of them my co-workers and it stinks to see them move on, but I also know they are doing the best for themselves and their families.

The same could be said for the class of 2017. The group of seniors I worked with this past year were great to get to know, just like all the senior classes before them.

I appreciated all their support and what I do could not be done without those kids. It is great to see them grow up and watch them become successful outside the classroom. I am not a teacher or coach, but still appreciate all they accomplish.

With 2016-17 in the rear view mirror, it will soon be time to focus on the upcoming season and I couldn't be more excited to see what accomplishments this group of Wildcats have in store. It has all the makings of a fun and special year.

Gagnebin steps down as LHS activities director



Louisburg High School activities director Darin Gagnebin presents the Wildcat girls soccer team with their regional championship trophy last month. Gagnebin resigned his post earlier this month to take a similar position in Paola.

Darin Gagnebin has a fondness for Louisburg High School, his coaches and students.

That made it all the more hard to say goodbye.

Gagnebin resigned his post as LHS assistant principal and activities director earlier this month to tentatively take the same position at Paola High School. His last day in Louisburg was last week.

Gagnebin spent a total of 17 years in the Louisburg school

district, with the last six spent as activities director. He was also a teacher and coach for 11 years.

Family was the biggest reason he decided to make the move. Gagnebin and his family currently reside in Paola and his two children attend schools in Paola.

"People have come and gone, but it is still family here," Gagnebin said. "I am comfortable here and Louisburg has done a lot for me. I just can't pass up an opportunity to be where my kids are at. I know I could have brought my kids here, but my wife and I made that decision a long time ago of where we were going to live because of where she taught and I taught. I never thought back when we first moved to Paola and when we had kids, that we would be in this position."

It was a difficult decision for Gagnebin as he leaves behind a group of coaches, several of whom he recently hired. The Louisburg district had a number of new coaches come on board for the upcoming school year.

"We have gone through some trials in the last couple of years and that is with any school," Gagnebin said. "I told my wife, that if this was going to happen the way it did and I could pick the time, I wish the timing would have happened two years down the road. I would have loved to see what this young group of teachers and coaches are going to do coming in.

"I told my wife that I was really excited about coming back next year and I felt we made some good hires. We have a passionate coaching staff coming on and they are great people with new ideas. It just happened out of the blue."

The opening came when former Paola High School principal Phil Bressler took the new principal job at Pittsburg High School. Paola assistant principal and activities director Jeff Hines was elevated to the Paola principal position, which left the Panthers needing an activities director.

It can be traced back even further when the Pittsburg High School journalism class wrote an investigative piece that ousted its newly hired principal, which forced the school to reopen the position and eventually hired Bressler.

“Had Pittsburg’s journalism class not done their job, we wouldn’t be sitting here talking right now,” Gagnebin said.

The Paola position was an opportunity Gagnebin just couldn’t pass up as he will have an opportunity to watch more of his children’s events and work closer to home.

“I have missed a lot of my own kids’ stuff,” he said. “But the people here have been really great, (Principal) Tammy (Thomasson) now and Dave (Tappan) before her, to let me try to get to as much stuff as I can. I still miss things. These opportunities don’t come around very often and I just figured this would be a great fit for me and my family.

“But I couldn’t ask for a better group of coaches here in Louisburg. They are good and passionate about what they do. I really have developed some good bonds over the years. I know some have left and some have stayed on, but the coaches and staff I have had has been great.”

Changes to classification system will impact Louisburg



Member schools in the Kansas State High School Activities Association sent ripples across the state last week when they passed two proposals that will affect high school athletics beginning in the 2018-19 season.

For football, the two 4A divisions and Class 2-1A have been eliminated. They have been replaced with 32 team classifications in 4A, 5A and 6A, while 3A and 2A will have 48-team classifications. The remaining schools will play in 1A.

The second proposal was for all other sports. Other than football, classes 4A, 5A and 6A will have 36 teams in each division. Classes 3A and 2A will have 64 schools each, while the remaining schools will be in 1A.

The football proposal passed with a vote of 215-73 and the all-sports proposal passed with a 207-145 majority. All of the classes, except 6A and 1A, were in favor.

With those new proposals comes a different playoff system for many of the sports.

Louisburg High School, which is a Class 4A school, will see changes in five sports programs – football, basketball, baseball, softball and volleyball.

In football, Louisburg will no longer have district play as the playoffs will begin in week nine. Class 4A will play an eight-game regular season and then each side of the state will be seeded in a bracket from 1 through 16, based on their record.

Given the fact the Frontier League currently has nine teams after recently adding three schools in Tonganoxie, Bonner Springs and Piper, the Wildcats will no longer have to play a non-league opponent. De Soto recently chose to leave the Frontier League following the 2017-18 season to join a new league made up of 5A schools.

"Normally we go out in October to Salina, we would redistrict for 2018 and 2019," Louisburg activities director Darin Gagnebin said. "I don't even know that we will have to go cause our league has nine teams, so we would play eight league games and the ninth game gets assigned to you for the playoffs. As of right now in football, we will no longer have any out of conference opponents as long as we maintain nine in the league."

Another change will be in basketball. For the postseason, there will no longer be substates, instead the 18 teams on each side of the state will be bracketed out by record beginning with two play-in games.

From there, the bracket will be sized down to four-team pods, with the higher seed hosting the game. Teams will have to win two games to reach the state tournaments. Pods will be 1-16-8-9 seeds, 4-13-5-12, 2-15-7-10 and 3-14-6-11. The eight pod winners will advance to the state tournament.

"Depending on where we fall, it could increase travel depending on where we are seeded," Gagnebin said. "We could have to drive down to Coffeyville or drive up to Atchison, you just don't know until the end of the year."

Basketball schedules will also be different with the addition of the new league teams in 2018-19. There will no longer be double round-robin schedules. There will be eight league games, six tournament games and athletic directors will have to find a way to fill the other six.

"We will start in August about building the new league

schedule and it will be tough," Gagnebin said. "One thing you will see is we won't have double round-robin's anymore because we can't play everyone twice. I think there will be traditional rivalries that are held to where we would play those twice due to proximity. Quite frankly, it wouldn't be smart for Louisburg not to play Paola, Ottawa or Spring Hill twice due to higher attendance numbers and proximity. It will probably increase travel costs because you are playing more non-conference opponents."

Baseball and softball will be similar as there will no longer be regionals. Like basketball, there will be two play-in games with the same pod structure. The top four overall seeds will each host all games in their pod on the same day.

In volleyball, there will be four substates across the state, broken into eight brackets. There will also be nine teams in each substate, which will require a play-in game. Teams will need to win two games to qualify for state.

Postseasons for wrestling, track, soccer, cross country and golf will remain the same.

However, even with the new changes, the proposals don't address the competitive balance issue between public and private schools that many members have been talking about for the last several years.

Although he likes the new playoff system, the fact these changes don't address the problem is one of the reasons Gagnebin voted no on the new proposals.

"It was a shock because I didn't think it was going to pass," Gagnebin said. "Other than the playoff system, in my opinion, it doesn't do anything for Class 4A. All the work that went into splitting 4A into two divisions is now gone. I feel bad for those schools because they put in a ton of work. It doesn't really affect us because we are locked into 4A and we are right in the middle of the pack."

"I didn't see how it benefited Louisburg or 4A, other than the playoffs system where it should ensure you have more competitive teams at state. Since you are seeding them out now, you shouldn't have a substate of teams with losing records. They could have done that without this."

Although private schools like Bishop Miege, which have won several state titles in the last few years, could find itself moving up a classification with the new measures, it isn't a permanent solution according to Gagnebin.

"Enrollment could bump some private schools up a class, but that doesn't fix the problem," Gagnebin said. "Private schools can control enrollment. According to (Miege) they are losing enrollment and could be back in 4A. It doesn't impact the private issue at all and that is why I didn't vote for it. It is not fixing what the 80 percent of athletic directors polled in Kansas asking what the biggest problems in classifications are. It doesn't address the real problem."

Three schools to join Frontier League



Three schools have accepted invitations, or will soon, to join the Frontier League for the 2018-19 season and beyond.

Piper, Bonner Springs and Tonganoxie will be leaving their

current home – the Kaw Valley League – to join the Frontier after all three were offered spots during a meeting in early April.

Their addition will now bring the Frontier League to 10 members, along with Louisburg, Paola, Ottawa, Spring Hill, De Soto, Baldwin and Eudora. The trio of schools made presentations to the current Frontier League members for admittance due to the fact the Kaw Valley is in the process of breaking up. Current member Bishop Ward is leaving the league next school year, which leaves them at six.

Piper quickly accepted the invitation following a vote of its board of education and is looking forward to joining the Frontier.

“We are extremely excited to get into a league with like-size schools and competition levels,” Piper High School activities director Doug Key said. “We believe Piper High School is good fit for the league due to the competition level in all activities and will match up well. We have played all current schools in various activities and felt like this would be a positive move for the future.

“Being in a league with various size schools and us being the smallest wasn’t going to be optimal. We are still are competitive in many areas, but we needed to secure a more balanced future. We feel like being in the middle, size-wise, will keep us competitive for years to come.”

According to this year’s classification numbers, Piper has a current enrollment of 601 students. Turner is the Kaw Valley’s biggest school with 1,114 students, followed by Lansing (910), Bonner Springs (758), Basehor-Linwood (710) and Tonganoxie (618).

Bonner Springs, Piper and Tonganoxie compare to other Frontier League programs. De Soto is the biggest school in the league with 854 students, followed by Ottawa (709), Spring Hill

(699), Paola (612), Louisburg (563), Eudora (471) and Baldwin (410).

Bonner Springs' board of education also approved the move to the Frontier League and Bonner Springs High School principal Rick Moulin echoed Key's statement.

"We have competed against teams in the Frontier League the past several years," Moulin said. "The schools in the Frontier League are a lot like Bonner Springs – we are competitive and value sportsmanship. The teams in the Frontier League are similar in size to Bonner Springs, which will be a great gauge for us as we try to compete at the highest level possible in 4A. Bonner Springs is a small town community, with great community support, much like the schools in the Frontier League.

"We are excited to be joining with Piper and Tonganoxie. We hope to continue to be able to compete against Basehor-Linwood, Lansing and Turner. I have a lot of respect for their schools and their programs. Ultimately, the Frontier League was a better fit for our students and our community."

Tonganoxie hasn't officially accepted the invitation, but it is just waiting for its board of education to approve the move during its May 8 meeting. At that point, according to Tonganoxie High School principal Mark Farrar, it will immediately send letter accepting the invite.

"We are very excited to join the Frontier League," Farrar said. "This new partnership will be very good for our students as well as our community. Joining the Frontier League will provide some great opportunities for our students from an athletic and activities standpoint. Tonganoxie mirrors many of the activities that most or all Frontier League schools offer. We see it as a league that will be a good fit for many years to come.

"One of the things that I think gets overlooked is the idea

that a strong league doesn't just offer opportunities on a playing field, but it also offers a chance for kids to network and make lifelong connections with students from all across the league. The Frontier League is a strong and stable league and we believe that it can advance the overall mission of what we want to do at Tonganoxie."

Louisburg High School activities director Darin Gagnebin now believes the league is healthier than ever.

"By adding teams to our league, it solidifies our league numbers for years to come ensuring that we, as a league, will remain strong and competitive whether schools decide to leave or stay," Gagnebin said. "We could have been in a situation in which the Frontier League could have dwindled to four or five schools, but instead we will be stronger at 10 teams, if all teams decided to stay.

That situation came about in March when it was reported by the Tonganoxie Mirror that Kaw Valley League member Lansing wanted to create a larger league that would have contained all or some combinations of Lansing, Blue Valley Southwest, De Soto, Leavenworth, Bonner Springs, Basehor-Linwood, Tonganoxie, Ottawa, Piper, Spring Hill, Turner and Topeka schools Seaman, Shawnee Heights and Topeka West.

A meeting was held between all the schools to look at possibilities of building a stronger league that would rebuild the current Kaw Valley that has Lansing, Turner, Piper, Bonner Springs, Tonganoxie and Basehor-Linwood.

The Frontier League responded with meetings of its own shortly after to discuss each member's happiness in the league after De Soto, Spring Hill and Ottawa attended the March meeting with Lansing.

De Soto mentioned needing more competition at the sub-varsity level since it has a growing enrollment and looked at the possibility of playing in a league with bigger schools since

it has made the jump to Class 5A.

Spring Hill's enrollment also looks to make that jump in three to four years, while Ottawa's enrollment usually hovers around the line between 4A and 5A. Still, all three schools stated during league meetings they were happy in their current position, with De Soto and Spring Hill stating they might need to make a move due to increasing enrollment numbers.

Faced with the possibility of losing at least two members, the Frontier invited Kaw Valley members to make presentations to join the league in order to fill those spots. Piper, Tonganoxie and Bonner Springs all made presentations and the Frontier League principals all offered invitations shortly after.

At this point, it appears the league is going to move forward with 10 members as no school has stated their desire to leave the Frontier – however, it doesn't mean it can't happen in the near future.

"I cannot speak for other schools in the Frontier League about their desire to stay or to leave," Gagnebin said. "I know some are considering their options and will do what they believe is in the best interest of their school, and I would support them in whatever they decide. I do believe though whatever they decide, with the addition of these new schools to our league, the Frontier League will remain solid in numbers and will continue to be one of the most competitive leagues in Class 4A.

"I believe the three schools that chose to petition our league for membership will be a great fit for the Frontier League. They offer all sports and activities that are currently offered by the league at all levels. Their enrollments, though larger than Louisburg, will put them in the middle to upper middle in size within the league."

The league schedule will also look different beginning with

the 2018-19 season, as there will no longer be a double round-robin schedule in certain sports and not every school will play each other in football.

“The biggest challenge will be league scheduling,” Gagnebin said. “Although it will change how we schedule things as a league, most league schools already have some or all of these schools on some of their athletic schedules already. It could increase the amount of non-league games we have to go out and find in some sports, since with 10 teams you can no longer play a double-round-robin schedule as we have currently, due to the amount of games allowed by KSHSAA.

“This is both good and bad, meaning, it could increase travel and some expense, but it allows us greater flexibility in the schedule to play other teams outside the league as well. One negative will be in football. With 10 teams, we will not be able to play every team in the league as we do now. As stated before though, solidifying the league as far as numbers go and increasing the competitiveness of the league are also positives.”