

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.

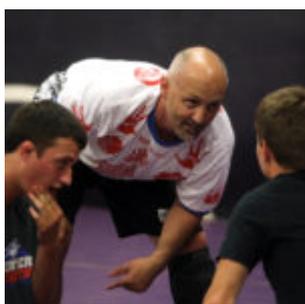
“The biggest conflict right now is Baldwin is right on the edge of becoming 3A and they think it will happen,” Holloway said. “If Baldwin is in our league, which is what we plan on, they are required to play five district games for football, which only leaves them three league games. If only three league 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.

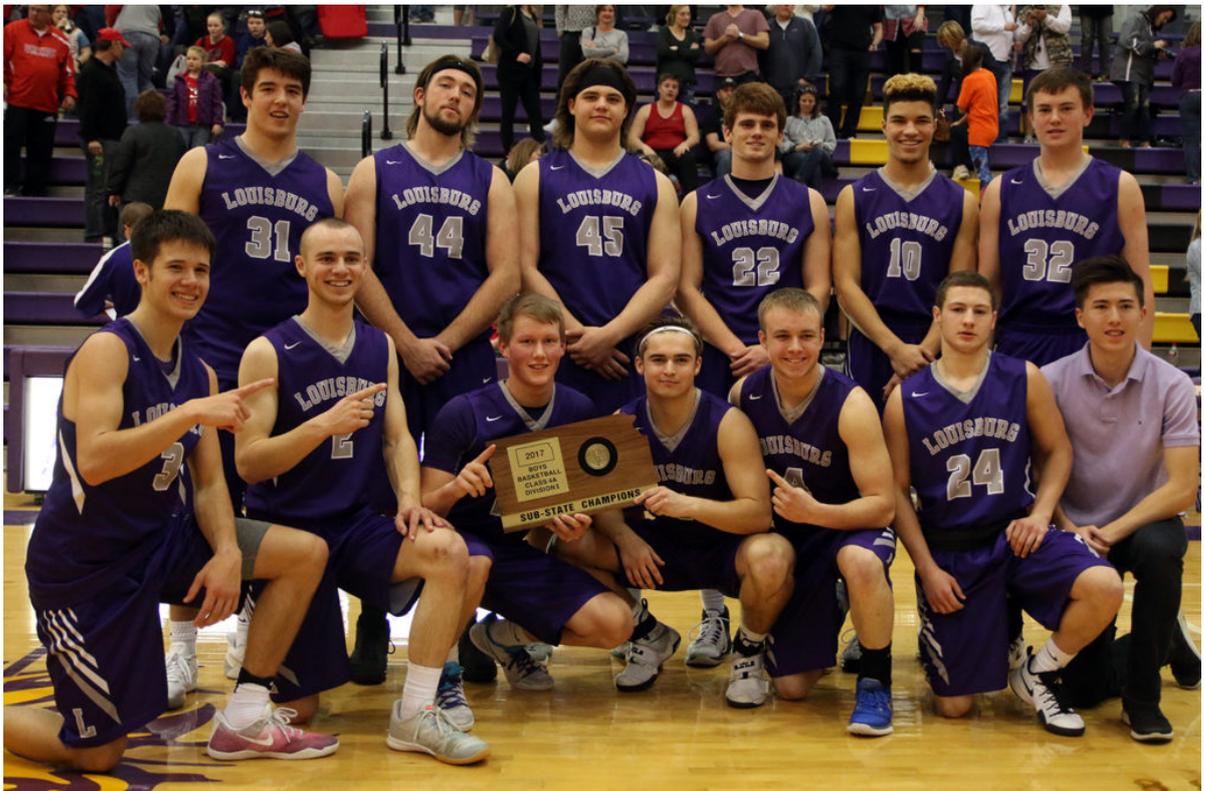
- There is probably no better place to start than the Louisburg soccer teams. Both the boys and girls teams earned spots in the state semifinals for the first time in program history and both finished fourth. The boys team made it to state for the first time in their 14 years, while the girls advanced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

Frontier League shakeup could happen soon



In a few months – or even weeks – the Frontier League as it currently stands could have a different look.

Since March, meetings have gone on within member schools of the Frontier League and Kaw Valley League to discuss possible realignment of both leagues.

The Frontier League currently has seven members – Louisburg, Paola, Spring Hill, De Soto, Ottawa, Baldwin and Eudora – and a meeting between the schools took place on March 28 to discuss where each school stood as far as their happiness in the league.

Brian Biermann, superintendent of USD 416, and Louisburg High School athletic director Darin Gagnebin attended the meeting on Louisburg's behalf and both relayed the fact that every school stated they were happy with the way the league is currently set up, but a couple schools came to the realization the Frontier League might not be able to offer what they are looking for.

De Soto and Spring Hill currently have growing enrollment numbers are interested in playing Class 5A competition. De Soto moved up to 5A this school year and Spring Hill will look to make the jump in the coming years with its larger enrollment. The rest of the schools all compete in Class 4A.

Both schools stated they would like more competition at the

sub-varsity level that schools like Louisburg, Baldwin and Eudora cannot provide. Competing in a mainly 5A league would relieve some of those problems.

“De Soto said they will probably open next year with 950 kids and they would grow by 100 the year after that,” Biermann said. “They are happy in the Frontier, but they feel like they need 5A competition and they feel like it could hurt them in football with seedings and tie-breakers. They could potentially get penalized by competing in a mainly 4A league.

“Spring Hill wants to be proactive. Their growth is coming. Their classes in the middle school are pretty good size. They won’t grow a lot next year, but they will in the next few years.”

What started the meetings is due to the fact that the Kaw Valley League is looking to rework their situation or create a brand new look altogether. The Kaw Valley currently has seven schools in Lansing, Turner, Bonner Springs, Tonganoxie, Piper, Bishop Ward and Basehor-Linwood, but one member – Bishop Ward – is leaving for a new league beginning next school year.

According to report in March from the *Tonganoxie Mirror*, Lansing wants to create a larger league that would contain 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.

Many of those schools are either in Class 5A already or are close based on enrollment numbers. The idea of competing against bigger competition is intriguing to De Soto, Spring Hill – and possibly Ottawa – the three largest schools in the Frontier League.

An idea was thrown around of creating a league of two divisions between the Kaw Valley and Frontier. One division would be 5A schools and the other would be 4A.

"We visited with our board of education and we are not in favor of a mega-league," Biermann said. "That has been talked about – having a league of 5A and 4A schools. We don't want to invite new 5A schools. We are ok with Spring Hill and De Soto staying in the league, even though they are growing, but we don't want to invite other 5A schools or have a mega league so they can have better competition.

"Our stance is if De Soto and Spring Hill feel like they need 5A competition and leave, then they can work towards that and we can work on filling those spots with 4A schools."

Both Biermann and Gagnebin feel like the Frontier League needs to be proactive as changes could be made sooner rather than later.

"We aren't panicking as a league as much as the Kaw Valley schools are because they know they are headed for a break up," Gagnebin said. "We could easily stay with the seven schools we have. Pretty soon, De Soto will have close to 1,000 kids. It is more on them if they want to be in our league, and if they are happy, by all means stay. We are not saying they have to leave, but they have to do best what is for their school, and if this league isn't the best option for you, then you have to look elsewhere."

Due to the fact De Soto and Spring Hill could be moving on, the Frontier is being proactive and inviting some members of the Kaw Valley League to come make presentations at a meeting Wednesday to see if they would be a fit in the Frontier.

According to Biermann, Tonganoxie, Piper, Bonner Springs and Basehor-Linwood High Schools will all make presentations at the meeting and then schools from both the Kaw Valley and the Frontier will meet to discuss options at a later date.

"I led the (March 28) meeting and I wanted to make sure everyone was as honest and open as possible," Biermann said. "There were no hurt feelings. Collectively we don't want a

mega-league, no additional 5A schools and that is firm from us, Paola, Baldwin and Eudora. Spring Hill and De Soto left the meeting, I think, that they need to start looking for potential 5A competition.

“The easy fix would be for De Soto and Spring Hill to join the bigger league and we take someone like Tonganoxie and Piper to replace them. Every school said they loved the Frontier League and competition, but it is time there has to be some conversations. The biggest thing is we don’t have three baseball, softball or soccer teams to schedule, but De Soto and Spring Hill want that. We can’t field C teams in some cases.”

The leagues are on a sort of a time crunch. With football reclassifications and scheduling beginning this October for the next two years, it would be the best case scenario to get the reshuffling done before then so they can schedule for the 2018-19 season and beyond according to Gagnebin.

The Louisburg activities director also believes keeping the right number of teams is also imperative for a healthy league.

“We want to maintain the integrity of our league, whether that is with seven or even eight schools,” Gagnebin said. “We want to maintain that number. Nine is a scheduling nightmare, and if you only have six teams, you are opening up a can of worms where if you leave an open spot, then the state could come in and assign certain schools to us that aren’t a good fit.

“I don’t necessarily want them to leave the league, but we need to be told if they are. I am more afraid of them leaving our league than them staying in our league. I am not afraid of the competition we face with them. We can compete with them in all the sports, but I am more afraid of us dropping from a seven to a five-team league.”

However, one hiccup remains. The Frontier League bylaws state that a member school must give two years notice before leaving

the league.

“If the dominoes start falling fast, the league could pass a bylaw amendment to allow for movement for De Soto or whoever, which is something I think they will have to do,” Gagnebin said. “Not much is happening now, but when it does it is going to happen quick. You better be ready to move with it and have a plan in place or you could be stuck on the outside.”

Adams leads Wildcats at state with first medal



Louisburg junior Ryan Adams points to the section of Wildcat fans following his win over Andover Central's Bryant Page in the "blood round " Saturday at the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships in Salina. Adams earned a state medal with the win and would finish sixth overall.

SALINA – When the final whistle sounded in Ryan Adams' "blood round" match, the Louisburg High School junior turned and pointed to the section of Wildcat fans at the Salina Bicentennial Center.

He clapped his hands and walked to the center of the mat. A weight had been lifted off his shoulders – he was a state medalist.

Adams captured his first career state medal as he finished sixth at 138 pounds Saturday during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships. He was one of eight Wildcats to make the trip to Salina for the two-day tournament, but he was the lone Wildcat to get on the medal stand.

“It feels amazing,” Adams said. “It feels great and very satisfying. I thought I wrestled pretty good overall, but I think the nerves were getting to me a little bit. I think the whole team wrestled well. I really want to thank my family, coaches and teammates for sticking with me and rooting me on.”

The road back to Salina has been a long one for Adams.

As a freshman, Adams finished one win away from a state medal but lost in the medal round. He was forced to sit out his sophomore season with an elbow injury, but came back this season in hopes of getting that state medal.

“It was definitely motivation for me,” Adams said of the last two years. “I wanted to be a four-time state placer, but I came up short my freshman year and I wasn’t able to wrestle last season. It really put a spark in me and it really was a motivator to go out and place.”

Adams opened the state tournament with a pin of Pratt’s Kadence Riner in the first period and then faced off with Tonganoxie’s Gad Huseman in the quarterfinals, where he lost a tough 6-4 decision.

That loss put him in the consolation bracket, but Adams responded with a pin of Anderson County’s Cole Denny. Then in the “blood round,” Adams secured his state medal with a 6-1 decision of Andover Central’s Bryant Page, who was ranked No. 5 coming into the state tournament.



Ryan Adams works for a pin of Anderson County's Cole Denny on Saturday in Salina.

Adams went on to face Baldwin's Levi Green in the consolation semifinals, where he lost a 10-1 major decision and was pinned by Burlington's Brett Bober in the fifth-place match.

"Ryan has had a tough run these last couple seasons," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Losing his entire sophomore season was tough for him, but once he had his surgery and finished his rehab, he was back at it in the summer months. None of our other wrestlers put in as much off-season time as he did. During the high school season, I think he had it in the back of his mind, what if I hurt my elbow again? I think it kept him conservative in some matches. But at state, we got the old Ryan Adams back, and it happened at just the right time.

"He was able to hang with the No. 3 ranked wrestler (Huseman) and lost 6-4, and then he beat the No. 5 ranked wrestler 6-1 to get into the medal rounds. He showed a lot of toughness in all his matches, and he showed a good deal of resilience after he lost in the quarterfinals. One of the best moments of the

season was when the final whistle blew in the blood round, and Ryan was so excited. He'd achieved one of his goals, to place at high school state."

Six of the eight Louisburg state qualifiers each won a match, but none of those were able to advance to the medal round.

Thad Hendrix (106), Dylan Meyer (145), Austin Moore (170), Austin Raetzel (195) and Mason Koechner (285) each finished the state tournament with a 1-2 record. Senior Nathan Keegan (120) and junior Kyle Allen (126) lost their first two matches Friday.

"It was tough seeing seven of our eight guys lose there in the first round, but then again, we weren't set up too well based on our regional results," Bovaird said. "Other than Adams, Raetzel was the only one who didn't have a ranked opponent in round one. Hendrix and Keegan both had the No. 1 ranked kids in their weights, Moore had the No. 2 guy, and Allen and Meyer each had the No. 4 guy in their weights.

"On the back side of the bracket, we had five guys win matches, which was nice to see. They wrestled tough in all their matches, but to come home winning a match is pretty good. When it comes down to it, the state tournament is tough, and I think this year was filled with some of the toughest brackets I've seen in a long time. Nathan Keegan was one of eight returning state medalists in his weight class. The same goes for Mason Koechner. Some guys in those brackets had to return home empty-handed. It just hurts that it had to be two of our guys. I thought we'd been better prepared than that."



Louisburg senior Mason Koechner battles with Holton's Kyler Tannahill during a consolation match Saturday in Salina.

Koechner (39-4), who entered the tournament as the No. 2 ranked heavyweight in Class 4A, had a difficult opening round match. He met Colby's Ethan Jay, the defending state runner-up and eventual third-place finisher, and lost a 5-2 decision.

After a scoreless first period, Jay earned an escape in the second period and then took down Koechner for two more points. Koechner earned the escape in the third period, but Jay got another takedown to widen his lead even more.

The Louisburg senior responded to pin Clearwater's Brady Helton in the second period in his first consolation match. However, Koechner lost a 3-1 decision to Holton's Kyler Tannahill in the next round.

Despite missing out on a state medal, Koechner's career at Louisburg was a strong one as he was two-time Frontier League champion, a 3-time state qualifier, a third-place finisher at state as a junior and finished with a career record of 130-32 – which is the second most wins in program history.

“Koechner's tournament was very tough for all of us, but I know Mason can't define his identity as a wrestler based on one tournament,” Bovaird said. “He was 4-0 against the state finalists this year. He pinned (Sam) Christy of Spring Hill twice, and he beat (Jake) Hastings of Santa Fe Trail twice (5-0 and 6-1). That's painful to see both of those guys make the finals. It just goes to show how much of a psychological factor there is in the sport of wrestling. Mason went all season ranked toward the top, only to hit a couple road-blocks along the way at the state tournament.

“Mason was the first wrestler I got to know from the Louisburg wrestling program when I first took the job, and he has had more of a role in rebuilding the program than I think he realizes.”

Raetzel (31-13) fell in his first match in a 13-7 decision to Goodland's Cameron Gray, but stayed alive in the consolation round with a wild 15-12 victory over Ulysses' Ayston Perez. Raetzel was down 12-10, but earned a takedown and a 3-point nearfall with 25 seconds left to secure the win.



Louisburg senior Austin Raetzel tries to hold down Goodland's Cameron Gray during his first round match Friday at the Class 4A state tournament.

The Louisburg senior lost his next consolation match as he was pinned in the second period by Basehor-Linwood's Alex Bejarano.

As for Moore (33-11), he responded after his first round loss

with pin of Concordia's Tracer Workman in the first round of consolation. He then met Bonner Springs' Trai Warburton but was eventually pinned in the third period in what was a back and forth match.

Meyer (23-20), another Louisburg senior, got a state win in the first round of consolation with a pin of Andover Central's David Mumford. His season came to an end in the next round as he was pinned by Chanute's Gage Leedy.

Hendrix (31-12) won a 4-2 decision over Holton's Cameron Smith in the first consolation round to get his first career state win, but lost a 7-0 decision to Clearwater's Hunter Reddick to end his season.

Keegan, who was a 3-time state qualifier, finished with a 20-9 record. Allen made his first state tournament and ended his season with a 25-13 mark.

Wildcats ready to begin medal quest at state tourney



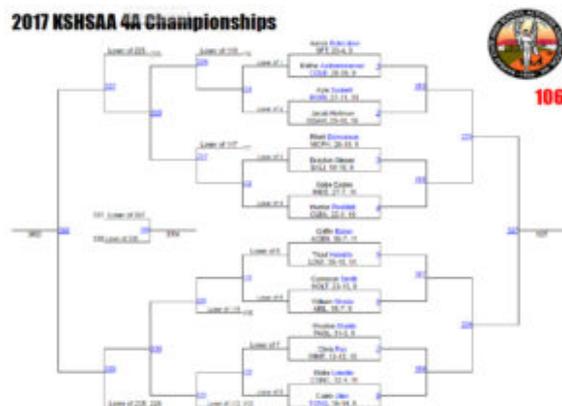
Louisburg senior Austin Raetzel was one of eight Wildcats to qualify last week at the regional tournament at Frontenac High School. The Wildcats will take part in the Class 4A state tournament starting Friday morning in Salina.

Following Tuesday's practice, Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird took his wrestlers over to the board that listed the program's state medalists.

He listed off several familiar names of Wildcat wrestling lore such as the school's first state champion in Doug Eaton. Then came champions Tim Dozier and Sonny Ewalt. He also talked about medalists like Mike Ewalt, Brian Becker, Tom Dozier and continued down the list of numerous others.

Bovaird wanted to give his eight state qualifiers a blast from the past and let them know what it takes to succeed in the toughest tournament of the season.

"I told the guys how it starts is with a dream of winning a medal, and it takes a supportive coaching staff who believes in them, a determined work ethic to pursue that goal, and a sense of faith in their abilities," Bovaird said. "I think we're right there with all those factors. We just have to get on the mat and do what we've been doing all season long. We need to score points and we need to battle to the last whistle."

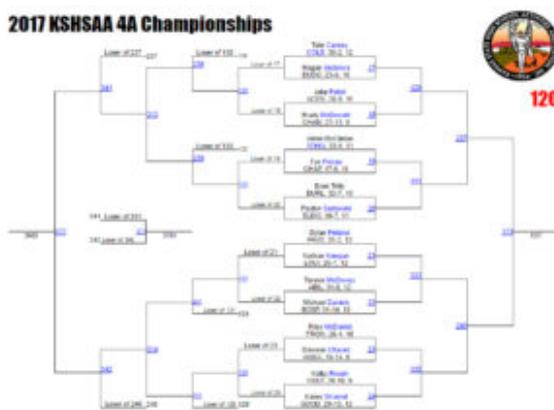


106-pound bracket – Thad Hendrix

The eight Louisburg state qualifiers will begin their journey

to a state medal at 10 a.m. Friday when the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championship gets underway at the Salina Bicentennial Center. The tournament will continue into Saturday.

Thad Hendrix (106 pounds), Nathan Keegan (120), Kyle Allen (126), Ryan Adams (138), Dylan Meyer (145), Austin Moore (170), Austin Raetzel (195) and Mason Koechner (285) will try for a state medal against some of the state's best wrestlers. The top six in each weight class will receive a medal.



120 pound bracket – Nathan Keegan

“It’s been a great week of practice,” Bovaird said. “Our qualifiers are focused and ready to go make some noise in Salina. We had a number of guys coming in to work out with the qualifiers – our seniors who didn’t make it to state, along with some junior varsity and younger varsity guys. I loved the atmosphere of the room. They’re goal-driven and ready to peak at just the right time.

“State is never easy, and the road to a state medal is filled with all sorts of obstacles. I like several of our spots in the brackets, too. I think several guys have multiple possible chances to win tough matches and get in for state medals.”

Koechner will lead the Wildcats as he earned his third consecutive spot in the state tournament. He is currently the

No. 2-ranked wrestler at 285 pounds following his loss in the regional final last Saturday in Frontenac to Independence's Seth Stoble.

A senior, Koechner (38-2) will have a tough first match as he will face off with Colby's Ethan Jay (35-6) – the defending state-runner up. Koechner finished third at state last season at 220 pounds and is hoping for another good showing this time around.



126 pound bracket – Kyle Allen

“Just like last year, I didn't wrestle very good at regionals and I took second in a match that I probably should have won,” Koechner said. “I came back at state and beat the kid I lost to and that is what I want to do this time around. I want to be more prepared than I was this week.”

Raetzel, a senior, will make his first state tournament appearance. Raetzel (30-11), who finished as regional runner-up last week, will meet Goodland's Cameron Gray (34-8) in the first round.

2017 KSHSAA 4A Championships



138 pound bracket – Ryan Adams

Adams, another regional runner-up, will make his second state tournament appearance after earning a spot as a freshman. The Louisburg junior had earned a 22-7 record on the season and will meet Pratt’s Kadence Riner (21-8) in his first match.

The Wildcats will have a veteran presence at state as Keegan will make his third state tournament appearance, while Hendrix will appear in his second. Allen, Meyer and Moore will compete for the first time.

“Mason Koechner, Nathan Keegan, Dylan Meyer, and Austin Raetzel are looking at their last matches this weekend,” Bovaird said. “They all have great stories. Mason and Nathan placed last year. Dylan qualified his senior year, 30 years after his dad Randy did the same thing for LHS. Austin has powered his way into a great position after being JV freshman and sophomore year and having a chance to prove himself these past two years. The four underclassmen are also in great positions. Thad and Ryan are making their second trips to state, and both have been ranked at various times this year. Kyle is reaping the rewards of all his off-season work, and I told him he’s wrestling the best I’ve ever seen him on the mat. Austin Moore is our youngest qualifier, but he’s so strong and determined that he can definitely upset some of the ranked kids.

2017 KSHSAA 4A Championships



145 pound bracket -Dylan Meyer

“The guys have put their work in, and now it’s time to finish what we started this season. At this point, nothing is guaranteed for anyone, and I have full faith that they can all go out there and do some great things.”

2017 KSHSAA 4A Championships



170 pound bracket – Austin Moore

2017 KSHSAA 4A Championships



285 pound bracket – Mason Koechner

2017 KSHSAA 4A Championships



195 pound bracket – Austin Raetzel

Elite 8: Wildcats qualify record number for state



Louisburg senior Austin Raetzel was one of three Wildcats to wrestle in the championship finals of the Class 4A regional tournament in Frontenac. Raetzel was one of eight Wildcats to qualify for the Class 4A state tournament in Salina.

FRONTENAC – Sometimes good things come to those who wait and the Louisburg wrestling team has waited a long time for a day like Saturday.

For the first time in more than 30 years, the Louisburg wrestling team will have eight wrestlers compete in the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships in Salina. All eight qualified for state during the two-day regional tournament at Frontenac High School.

Thad Hendrix (106 pounds), Nathan Keegan (120), Kyle Allen (126), Ryan Adams (138), Dylan Meyer (145), Austin Moore (170), Austin Raetzel (195) and Mason Koechner (285) will all compete in the state tournament beginning this Friday. Louisburg also finished fifth in the team standings

The Wildcats tied a school record of eight state qualifiers that was set in 1984 on a team led by former coach Dee Graham.

“Two years ago, I was ecstatic – and relieved – to be taking five guys to state,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Last year, I was proud to take five again. This year, I can’t help but look back with pride on everything the program has accomplished. It hasn’t been that long since we spent two

seasons without any state qualifiers. 2013 and 2014 were very humbling experiences for me as a coach, and I'm so proud of how those two seasons served as motivators for the wrestlers in the Louisburg community."

Three of those qualifiers— Adams, Raetzel and Koechner — all wrestled for a regional title. However, all three came up short in their quest for a regional crown and each finished second.

Koechner, the No. 1 ranked heavyweight in Class 4A, squared off with No. 2 Seth Stroble of Independence. To get to that match, Koechner pinned Columbus' Chance Meyer in 39 seconds in the quarterfinals and then pinned Prairie View's Dylan Frederick in 40 seconds in the semifinals.

The wins set up the showdown with Stroble in what was a tight match all the way to end. Tied at 1-all with 20 seconds left in the third period, Koechner tried for a takedown and slipped, which allowed Stroble to get on top for the 2-point takedown and then added two more back points in the 6-1 loss.

"I thought Mason was in good position a lot of the match," Bovaird said. "He was the aggressor, and we knew going into that match that Stroble could be dangerous. When Mason got an underhook in neutral, Stroble liked to lock hands and try to crack down on Mason's elbow. When Mason stepped in for a power step, Stroble was looking to step on his foot and trip him.

"It came down to the last twenty seconds. Stroble hit a bad shot, Mason countered and got too eager on the go-behind. That late in a heavyweight match, both boys are sweaty, and Mason slipped off. It's better to lose that match here than at state."



Louisburg's Mason Koechner battles Independence's Seth Stroble during the 285-pound regional final match.

It was just Koechner's second loss of the season and he is 38-2 heading into the state tournament this weekend. It will be his third straight state appearance, and despite the setback, the Louisburg senior was happy with the way the team performed.

"It is awesome and to get eight guys to state is great," Koechner said. "That ties the most we have ever gotten. We have a good team this year and I am glad to see all those guys go.

"I definitely didn't wrestle my best this weekend. I felt a little gassed during my finals match and I just didn't feel like myself. (Stoble) was hard to move around. I was getting my shots set up, but I wasn't finishing. I couldn't finish anything. At the end I tried to force some things and I

shouldn't have tried to force it. Hopefully I can have a good week of practice this week and get back to state ready to go."

At 195 pounds, Raetzel opened the tournament with two consecutive pins on Friday and then defeated Anderson County's Dominic Sutton in a 9-4 decision in the semifinals to earn a spot in the finals.

Raetzel, a senior, squared off with Frontenac's Nathan Kauffman in the finals Saturday, but lost in a 13-5 major decision.

"I have one more week to refine what I need to do," Raetzel said. "I think I wrestled pretty well this weekend. The guy in my finals match was pretty tough, and it was definitely a struggle. It was a disappointing match and I feel like there were some missed opportunities for shots and some reversals, but I will learn from it. I am excited for state."



Junior Ryan Adams finished second at 138 pounds and will

make his second state appearance.

Adams also had a great start at 138 pounds Friday as he pinned Frontenac's Kaleb Kroenke in 14 seconds and then defeated Prairie View's Tre Kline in an 11-6 decision to reach the finals.

The Louisburg junior, who qualified for state as a freshman, lost in a 15-0 technical fall to Burlington's Brett Bober in the finals.

"I thought we did awesome as a team," Adams said. "I think we worked really hard this year to get to the point where we are at. The whole team has done well. We have busted our butts in the practice room and worked hard. We definitely deserved it.

"I thought I wrestled pretty well in my first three matches, but I definitely didn't show up and wrestle my last match. I just have to keep grinding and getting better."

The round where the Wildcats excelled the most was in the consolation semifinals – or better known at the "blood round." The winner of each match earned a spot in the state tournament.

Louisburg had seven wrestlers in the blood round and five came away with a win.

Hendrix opened things up with a pin in 13 seconds to earn his second consecutive state appearance. Keegan earned a third straight tournament appearance with a 3-0 decision over Prairie View's Brayden Dame.

Allen qualified for his first state tournament as he won a 10-4 decision over Paola's Noah Bowden. Meyer did the same, as he will be making his first appearance in Salina thanks to a pin of Independence's Ryan Bruce.

Moore won the battle with Osawatomie's Cody Hazlett in his

consolation semifinal match in a 12-7 decision to earn his first state bid.

Tucker Batten (132) and Ben Hupp (182) were each close in their semifinal matches, but Batten lost a 3-0 decision to Prairie View's Maeson Kehl in dramatic fashion, while Hupp lost a 12-9 decision to Anderson County's Kyle Lamb.

"The pattern has usually been one of heartache and disappointment in the blood round, but this season is where things have really turned around," Bovaird said. "It's been exciting and rewarding seeing these guys continue to step up this season. The team has shown a ton of maturity and determination as they progress through their wrestling careers. Four of our seven seniors are heading to state, and we'll have four returners on the squad next season.

"The exciting thing is that with the two matches we lost in the blood round, they were both within our reach to win. It hurt when Ben Hupp fell short at 182. He wanted to go to state, and he chased that goal with everything he had, including a quarterfinal round upset of the No. 2 seed. At 132, Tucker was trailing by three and had a cradle locked up – in fact, he was in the process of turning his opponent when the referee stopped the match and called a stalemate. That was tough to see his season end like that."



Louisburg coaches (from left) Andy Wright, Bobby Bovaird and Brandon Ott get into Dylan Meyer's 145-pound consolation semifinal match in which he earned a pin and qualified for state.

The finals and consolation finals round didn't go as well as the Wildcats had hoped as they finished with just one win in their seven matches. That lone win came from Allen at 126 pounds as he finished in third place with a 3-1 decision over Columbus' Nate Thomas.

Hendrix, Keegan, Meyer and Moore each took fourth place, but all eight Wildcats are ready for what lies ahead.

"The boys are excited to be going to state, but one perennial challenge that a coach faces is keeping them focused on state," Bovaird said. "Qualifying for state is an awesome deal – one to be proud of, for sure – but we don't want to start celebrating until we've finished our business this season."

“The record books aren’t closed yet, and we still have a chance to get out to Salina and make our mark this season. That finals round was a little brutal for us, losing all but one match. The thing is, we’ve got this week to reset and refocus, and with the group we’ve got going to state, I think we can do just that.”



Junior Kyle Allen finished third at 126 pounds.



Sophomore Austin Moore finished fourth at 170 pounds.



Senior Dylan Meyer was fourth at 145 pounds.



Senior Nathan Keegan finished fourth at 120 pounds.



Thad Hendrix took fourth at 106 pounds.

Louisburg Regional Wrestling Results

106 – Thad Hendrix (30-10) placed 4th and scored 9.00 team points.

Quarterfinal – Thad Hendrix (Louisburg) 30-10 won by decision over Gavin Daniels (Chanute) 9-17 (Dec 8-7)

Semifinal – Gabe Eades (Independence) 27-7 won by major decision over Thad Hendrix (Louisburg) 30-10 (MD 15-1)

Cons. Semi – Thad Hendrix (Louisburg) 30-10 won by fall over Johnathon Williams (Burlington) 17-21 (Fall 0:23)

3rd Place Match – Jacob Hollman (Osawatomie) 23-10 won in sudden victory – 1 over Thad Hendrix (Louisburg) 30-10 (SV-1 11-6)

120 – Nathan Keegan (20-7) placed 4th and scored 9.00 team points.

Champ. Round 1 – Nathan Keegan (Louisburg) 20-7 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal – Nathan Keegan (Louisburg) 20-7 won in sudden victory – 1 over Kyle Montojo (Fort Scott) 14-12 (SV-1 3-1)

Semifinal – Evan Totty (Burlington) 32-7 won by major decision over Nathan Keegan (Louisburg) 20-7 (MD 12-2)

Cons. Semi – Nathan Keegan (Louisburg) 20-7 won by decision over Brayden Dame (La Cygne-Prairie View) 21-14 (Dec 3-0)

3rd Place Match – Brady McDonald (Chanute) 27-13 won by fall over Nathan Keegan (Louisburg) 20-7 (Fall 2:34)

126 – Kyle Allen (25-11) placed 3rd and scored 10.00 team points.

Quarterfinal – Kyle Allen (Louisburg) 25-11 won by decision over Nate Thomas (Columbus) 8-16 (Dec 3-0)

Semifinal – Logan McDonald (Chanute) 19-11 won by fall over Kyle Allen (Louisburg) 25-11 (Fall 5:17)

Cons. Semi – Kyle Allen (Louisburg) 25-11 won by decision over Noah Bowden (Paola) 20-13 (Dec 10-4)

3rd Place Match – Kyle Allen (Louisburg) 25-11 won by decision over Nate Thomas (Columbus) 8-16 (Dec 3-1)

132 – Tucker Batten (22-10) place is unknown and scored 5.00 team points.

Champ. Round 1 – Tucker Batten (Louisburg) 22-10 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal – Tucker Batten (Louisburg) 22-10 won by major decision over Caleb Cline (Paola) 13-12 (MD 8-0)

Semifinal – Mason Jameson (Frontenac) 21-12 won by decision over Tucker Batten (Louisburg) 22-10 (Dec 10-5)

Cons. Semi – Maeson Kehl (La Cygne-Prairie View) 3-3 won by decision over Tucker Batten (Louisburg) 22-10 (Dec 3-0)

138 – Ryan Adams (22-7) placed 2nd and scored 18.00 team points.

Champ. Round 1 – Ryan Adams (Louisburg) 22-7 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal – Ryan Adams (Louisburg) 22-7 won by fall over Kaleb Kroenke (Frontenac) 3-5 (Fall 0:14)

Semifinal – Ryan Adams (Louisburg) 22-7 won by decision over Tre Kline (La Cygne-Prairie View) 26-15 (Dec 11-6)

1st Place Match – Brett Bober (Burlington) 39-8 won by tech fall over Ryan Adams (Louisburg) 22-7 (TF-1.5 4:49 (15-0))

145 – Dylan Meyer (22-18) placed 4th and scored 12.00 team points.

Champ. Round 1 – Dylan Meyer (Louisburg) 22-18 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal – Dylan Meyer (Louisburg) 22-18 won by major decision over Anthony Keaton (Parsons) 20-12 (MD 9-1)

Semifinal – Colby Johnson (Burlington) 37-0 won by fall over Dylan Meyer (Louisburg) 22-18 (Fall 1:35)

Cons. Semi – Dylan Meyer (Louisburg) 22-18 won by fall over Ryan Bruce (Independence) 21-16 (Fall 4:26)

3rd Place Match – Gavin Cullor (La Cygne-Prairie View) 15-7 won by decision over Dylan Meyer (Louisburg) 22-18 (Dec 6-0)

152 – Alec Maler (4-14) place is unknown and scored 0.00 team points.

Champ. Round 1 – Jordan Ishimura (Frontenac) 28-7 won by fall over Alec Maler (Louisburg) 4-14 (Fall 1:37)

Cons. Round 1 – Tyler Metcalf (Parsons) 19-18 won by fall over Alec Maler (Louisburg) 4-14 (Fall 1:28)

160 – Blue Caplinger (22-17) place is unknown and scored 3.00 team points.

Champ. Round 1 – Blue Caplinger (Louisburg) 22-17 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal – John Diediker (Osawatomie) 19-7 won by decision over Blue Caplinger (Louisburg) 22-17 (Dec 8-3)

Cons. Round 2 – Blue Caplinger (Louisburg) 22-17 won by fall over Logan Hall (Fort Scott) 0-6 (Fall 1:52)

Cons. Round 3 – Dalton Duke (Garnett-Anderson County) 21-14 won by decision over Blue Caplinger (Louisburg) 22-17 (Dec 2-1)

170 – Austin Moore (32-9) placed 4th and scored 11.00 team points.

Champ. Round 1 – Austin Moore (Louisburg) 32-9 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal – Austin Moore (Louisburg) 32-9 won by fall over Tavon Blazek (Iola) 23-12 (Fall 1:18)

Semifinal – Andrew Mays (Frontenac) 17-7 won by fall over Austin Moore (Louisburg) 32-9 (Fall 5:52)

Cons. Semi – Austin Moore (Louisburg) 32-9 won by decision over Cody Hazlett (Osawatomie) 22-9 (Dec 12-7)

3rd Place Match – Ridge Smith (Columbus) 24-8 won by decision over Austin Moore (Louisburg) 32-9 (Dec 6-4)

182 – Ben Hupp (22-18) place is unknown and scored 5.00 team points.

Champ. Round 1 – Ben Hupp (Louisburg) 22-18 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal – Ben Hupp (Louisburg) 22-18 won by major decision over Quiency Jones (Altamont-Labette County) 25-7 (MD 17-4)

Semifinal – Jesse Henry (La Cygne-Prairie View) 28-12 won by fall over Ben Hupp (Louisburg) 22-18 (Fall 4:09)

Cons. Semi – Kyle Lamb (Garnett-Anderson County) 32-7 won by decision over Ben Hupp (Louisburg) 22-18 (Dec 12-9)

195 – Austin Raetzel (30-11) placed 2nd and scored 20.00 team

points.

Champ. Round 1 – Austin Raetzel (Louisburg) 30-11 won by fall over Sam Chamber (La Cygne-Prairie View) 13-20 (Fall 1:49)

Quarterfinal – Austin Raetzel (Louisburg) 30-11 won by fall over Gary Lower (Iola) 6-13 (Fall 0:34)

Semifinal – Austin Raetzel (Louisburg) 30-11 won by decision over Dominic Sutton (Garnett-Anderson County) 29-9 (Dec 9-4)

1st Place Match – Nathan Kaufman (Frontenac) 29-8 won by major decision over Austin Raetzel (Louisburg) 30-11 (MD 13-5)

220 – Terry Allen (11-19) place is unknown and scored 1.00 team points.

Champ. Round 1 – Terry Allen (Louisburg) 11-19 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal – Jake Miller (Paola) 11-0 won by fall over Terry Allen (Louisburg) 11-19 (Fall 0:22)

Cons. Round 2 – Terry Allen (Louisburg) 11-19 won by decision over Rich Garris (Independence) 8-11 (Dec 3-0)

Cons. Round 3 – Ben Daniels (Fort Scott) 12-12 won by fall over Terry Allen (Louisburg) 11-19 (Fall 3:37)

285 – Mason Koechner (38-2) placed 2nd and scored 20.00 team points.

Champ. Round 1 – Mason Koechner (Louisburg) 38-2 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal – Mason Koechner (Louisburg) 38-2 won by fall over Chance Meyer (Columbus) 4-16 (Fall 0:39)

Semifinal – Mason Koechner (Louisburg) 38-2 won by fall over Dylan Frederick (La Cygne-Prairie View) 22-16 (Fall 0:40)

1st Place Match – Seth Stroble (Independence) 36-1 won by decision over Mason Koechner (Louisburg) 38-2 (Dec 6-1)