

LHS wrestling hands out postseason honors



Brenton Wrigley shakes hands with head coach Bobby Bovaird upon receiving the Wrestler of the Year award Tuesday during the team's postseason banquet at Louisburg High School.

Their season might have ended on the state wrestling mats in Salina, but members of the Louisburg wrestling team got a chance to reflect on what was a positive season for the Wildcats.

During Tuesday's end of the season banquet, coach Bobby Bovaird talked about a season in which the Wildcats ended a two-year drought and qualified five for the state tournament. Brenton Wrigley, Anders Vance, Mason Koechner, Ryan Adams and Nathan Keegan all made their first trip to state.

The Wildcats also had four wrestlers who had won at least 30 matches and six program records fell. As a team, Louisburg finished in the top three at five tournaments and had a 12-5 dual record.

"The last few years have been humbling," Bovaird said during the banquet. "But I knew that with patience, dedication and hard work we would be able to bring Louisburg back to the point where we are a competitive program. And here we are."



The Louisburg High School wrestling team gathers together for one final picture after their postseason banquet Tuesday.

Two Wildcats also were recognized for their work in the classroom. Seniors Wrigley and Zach Knox were each awarded honorable mention Academic All-State by the Kansas Wrestling Coaches Association.

Wrigley, who finished with a 35-9 record and a state qualifying bid at 195 pounds, took the highest honor as he was named Louisburg's Wrestler of the Year. The coaches also gave out 22 letters and several other honors.

The awards given out are:

Varsity letterwinners

Seniors: Zach Knox, Nephi Rodriguez, Billy Rose and Brenton Wrigley

Juniors: Jordan Crowder, Jimmy Dolan, Zach Jones, Dillin Roberts, Bradley Trageser, Chris Turner and Anders Vance

Sophomores: David Bindi, Connor Green, Ben Hupp, Nathan Keegan, Mason Koechner, Dylan Meyer and Lyndon Smith

Freshman: Ryan Adams, Kyle Allen, Tucker Batten and Thad Hendrix

Team awards

Wrestler of the Year: Brenton Wrigley

Wildcat of the Year: Nathan Keegan

Workhorse Award: Anders Vance

Newcomer of the Year: Ryan Adams

JV Wrestler of the Year: Bradley Trageser

Highest team GPA: Austin Raetzel

30-match winners

Nathan Keegan (30-19), Ryan Adams (37-12), Brenton Wrigley (35-9) and Mason Koechner (39-14)

Records

Zach Knox: Career Nearfall-2 (28); Career Reversals (38); Career Escapes (77)

Ryan Adams: Season Nearfall-2 (19); Season Reversals (25)

Mason Koechner: Season Pins (33)

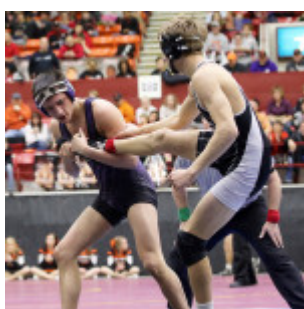
Tri-County Spotlight

First team: Nathan Keegan (113 pounds); Ryan Adams (138); Mason Koechner (220); Anders Vance (285)

Second team: Brenton Wrigley (195)

Honorable mention: Zach Knox (132)

Wildcats come up short of medals



Louisburg freshman Ryan Adams battles Frontenac's Brandon Miekus during a 138-pound match Saturday at the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships in Salina. Adams went 2-2 on the day and finished a win short of a medal.

SALINA – As a freshman, Ryan Adams set a pretty high goal for himself.

Adams wanted to be a four-time state medalist and eventually a state champion for the Wildcats. One of those dreams is still alive, while the other was dashed Saturday during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships.

The Louisburg 138-pounder came up one win short of a medal when he was pinned by Holton's Tyler Price in the first period of the consolation quarterfinals. Adams finished the tournament at 2-2.

“We talked about what it means that he fell short of one of his goals,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “I told him that falling short of one goal should make him all that much more motivated to pursue the other goals. Now that he can’t be a 4-time placer, he’s got more motivation to pursue his goal of being a state champion. He’s a talented kid.”

Adams wasn’t the only Wildcat to end his season with a loss. Anders Vance (285), Mason Koechner (220), Brenton Wrigley (195) and Nathan Keegan (113) also came up short of a state medal at the Salina Bicentennial Center.

All four wrestlers ended their state runs with a 1-2 record, and even though they didn’t reach the medal stand, winning a state tournament match meant something to them and their coach.

“It was such an exciting weekend,” Bovaird said. “I’m so proud of the fact that not only did five wrestlers make it to state, but all five went down there to compete for a medal. They all gave 100 percent in their matches. Each guy won at least one match. Technically, that put each of them in the top-12 of their weight classes. However, I had a sinking feeling in my stomach after it was all over.

“The last two years, I’d felt so low after not qualifying anyone for state. That was a solid blow to my ego as a coach. This year, I was pretty happy to take five kids to state, and I was so proud that they all won at least one match at state. When it was done, it hit me that this was the first time as a competitor or coach that I’d been at the state tournament and left without a state placer. I didn’t like that feeling, and I’m disappointed. The good thing is that I have reason to be disappointed. The boys are such great kids to be around, and they’re very talented and hard-working. I’m not disappointed in them – I’m disappointed for them. I know they can do great things, and I just wanted the best for them. Next season will be something different. I love how these guys are feeling

motivated already, and I'm feeling that motivation, too."

Adams opened his state tournament run Friday against Wamego's Dalton Carley, an eventual state medalist. Carley, who beat Adams earlier in the year, had a little more difficult time as he eventually beat Adams by a 4-2 decision.

Later on in the day, Adams beat Tonganoxie's Garrett Martin by an 8-0 major decision after losing to Martin earlier in the year. He then followed it up with another revenge win Saturday when he pinned Frontenac's Brandon Miekus, who he lost two in the final seconds of the regional semifinals.

Adams finished the year with a 37-12 record, many of which came thanks to wrestlers who made it far in the state tournament.

"When we were watching the 138-pound state semifinals, we figured out that with the four wrestlers on the mat, they accounted for 8 of his 12 losses, including three to Baldwin's Thomas Lisher, who was the eventual state champion," Bovaird said. "Even though Ryan fell short of his goal, he definitely gave it everything he had. With all the time he dedicates to wrestling in the offseason, he's definitely on the right track to be our next state champion, and because he's a great team member, I expect his passion to rub off on his teammates."



Louisburg heavyweight Anders Vance works for position on Towanda-Circle's Austin King on Saturday at the state tournament in Salina. Vance finished his season with a 27-9 record

The tournament got off to a rough and controversial start for Vance, who lost his opening round match to Ulysses' Austin Ochoa in a 7-6 decision in overtime. The match was tied at 6-all but Vance had Ochoa in a headlock, but it slipped and was called for an illegal hold, giving Ochoa a point and the match.

Vance rebounded to pin Jefferson West's Michael Majors in the first period Friday before falling to Towanda Circle's Austin King by decision in his first match Saturday.

"I wasn't happy with how the officials called his first match Friday, but then again I've always told the team to do everything they can to keep the match result out of the hands

of the officials,” Bovaird said. “Anders had a much better second match, but in his third, I think that he just hit an obstacle he couldn’t overcome. His opponent, a kid from Circle, had been a state qualifier the year before, and I think that experience gave him an advantage over Anders. Next year, however, Anders is going to be able to take his experience from this season, plus his confidence, and use it to push him through any obstacle in the way as he tries to win state.”



Louisburg senior Brenton Wrigley ties to hold down Rock Creek’s Colton Hill on Saturday in Salina. Wrigley lost the match by a 4-2 decision and ended his Wildcat career with a 35-9 record.

Wrigley, a senior, was able to get his first ever state victory when he opened the tournament Friday with a 7-3 victory in overtime over Hugoton’s Noel Camacho. In the

quarterfinals, Wrigley fell in a close 7-4 decision to Chapman's Jacob Stoneberger, before falling again in the consolation round Saturday by a 4-2 decision to Rock Creek's Colton Hill.

The loss ended his season and Wildcat career with a 35-9 record.

"It was definitely bittersweet," Bovaird said. "He's been such a strong leader for the team. His sophomore and junior seasons, he had some setbacks with minor injuries and he couldn't build up the confidence that he should have had. This year, after having a great week at the Nebraska Outdoor Challenge Camp and a solid football season, he walked onto the mat with all sorts of confidence. He won three tournaments (Tonganoxie, Topeka, and League), had 35 wins, and beat state-ranked kids throughout the season. I'm very proud of his growth, although I wish the season had ended differently."



Louisburg's Nathan Keegan stops at shot from Chanute's Gage Leedy during a 113-pound match Saturday at the state

tournament in Salina. Keegan ended his season with a 30-19 record

Keegan and Koechner both sophomores, also picked up their first state victories. Both wrestlers lost their first match, before rebounding to win their next.

Keegan, after losing to Tonganoxie Patterson Starcher in overtime Friday, came back with a pin of Clearwater's Jake Thomas in the consolation round. He was eventually pinned by Chanute's Gage Leedy in the third round of his next match.



Sophomore Mason Koechner battles Smoky Valley's Jarod DeMott Saturday in Salina. Koechner was 1-2 at the state tournament at 220 pounds and finished the year with a team-high 39 wins.

As for Koechner, he fell to Colby's Austin Hart, the eventual

state champion in the first round. He responded with a pin of Holton's Nathan Shields in his next match Friday.

On Saturday, however, Koechner's season came to an end when he fell 10-4 to fourth-place finisher Jarod DeMott from Smoky Valley.

"We made the trip to state, and simply qualifying wasn't good enough for the guys who went," Bovaird said. "They wanted to win matches and bring home medals. Next year, we're not just gunning to send people to state; we're gunning to bring home medals and to get Louisburg to the top of Kansas Class 4A."

Wildcats gear up for state run



Mason Koechner is one of five Louisburg wrestlers to make an appearance at the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships beginning Friday at the Salina Bicentennial Center.

It could be easy for the five state qualifiers on the Louisburg High School wrestling team to look back and be satisfied with the season they've had.

All five are first-time state qualifiers, and for some people, that would be enough. Louisburg also hasn't qualified anyone for state since 2012 so the season could already be considered a success.

That is far from the attitude the Wildcats will take to the mat Friday when the Class 4A state tournament begins at the Salina Bicentennial Center. They want to make sure they come home with some hardware.

"This team is ready to go," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "We talked about the boys' strengths and why they should go to Salina expecting to win matches and bring home medals. It's not a matter of 'I hope' or 'I wish'; instead, it's a matter of being confident and believing in their own abilities.

"I'm excited for state, more excited than I've ever been. Maybe it's because this state team has been three years in the making. We're competitive, and we're talented. Once these guys fully understand that, they can make a huge impact at state."

The tournament, which is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. on Friday, won't be easy for any of the five Wildcats. Even for regional champion Anders Vance, the road is a difficult one.

Vance (26-7) will square off with Ulysses' Austin Ochoa (20-14) in the first round, and if he advances, will set up a possible revenge match with Wamego's Kasey Feyh (31-2), who he lost to a month ago at Baldwin.

"Anders will have a tough first match against a western Kansas kid," Bovaird said. "Western Kansas has always had a reputation for tough kids, but the advantage is that we know nothing about them and they know nothing about us.

"In the second round, Anders may have a rematch with a Wamego kid who beat him at Baldwin. The best place to have a revenge victory is at state. That would put him in the semifinals,

guaranteeing him a top-6 finish.”

Senior Brenton Wrigley (34-7) will begin his journey to a possible state medal at 195 pounds when he faces Hugoton’s Noel Camancho (20-14) in the first round. Sophomore 113-pounder Nathan Keegan (29-17) will meet Tonganoxie’s Patterson Starcher (31-12) in the opening round.

Freshman Ryan Adams (35-10) will have a tough first round matchup when he faces off with senior Dalton Carley (33-4) from Wamego at 138 pounds. Sophomore Mason Koechner (38-12) might have the toughest first round opponent of all as he meets Colby’s Austin Hart (34-5) at 220 pounds. Hart is also a regional champion.

“This is the first trip for all five wrestlers, but we’ve been stressing to them all week that we’re not just making the trip to Salina for fun,” Bovaird said. “We’re going there to win some medals. Every one of our guys has a chance to win matches, and if they apply themselves and get focused, they can upset some ranked kids. We’ve got the ability to bring home two or three medals.

“Ryan Adams and Mason Koechner have been to kids state before, and they’ve competed on the national level. Anders Vance and Brenton Wrigley are upperclassmen and have the advantage of maturity. Nathan Keegan is making his first trip, but he’s a kid who’s confident with his abilities.”

The top six in each weight class will earn a medal. The tournament will continue at 9 a.m. on Saturday with several consolation rounds before ending with the finals.

Vance wins regional, Wildcats qualify five for state



Louisburg junior Anders Vance works to pin Spring Hill's Sam Christy on Saturday at the Class 4A regional wrestling tournament in Louisburg. Vance won the regional crown at 285 pounds and was one of five Wildcats to qualify for state

The first time Anders Vance took to the wrestling mat was in the eighth grade.

Ironically, that was the last time the Louisburg High School wrestling team qualified anyone for the state tournament, which was in 2012. It was only fitting that Vance, a junior, was the one who broke the two-year drought.

On Friday, Vance became the first Wildcat to qualify for the Class 4A state tournament during the regional tournament in Louisburg since 2012. The Louisburg heavyweight won his semifinal match and eventually became regional champion after he pinned Spring Hill's Sam Christy in just 53 seconds in the championship match.

"To be honest, I really wasn't expecting this," Vance said. "I

came in thinking that I would do all right, but I really didn't come in thinking I was going to win regionals. I am definitely happy with the way it turned out."

The good news didn't stop there, however, as the Wildcats qualified four more for the state tournament and by the time Saturday was over Louisburg sat in fourth-place in the team standings. Not too bad for a team that had a rough couple of years.

Senior Brenton Wrigley (195 pounds), sophomores Mason Koechner (220) and Nathan Keegan (113), along with freshman Ryan Adams (138) will all make the trip to Salina this Friday in hopes for a state medal. The top four in each weight class earned spots at state.

"To qualify five kids was an attainable goal," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Earlier in the season, I wasn't sure how we would end up, but as we neared the post season, the coaching staff saw a huge shift in the mindsets of our guys. We saw a level of competitiveness that hadn't been there before.

"We're all very excited after this weekend. It's not just a relief after having been shut out the last two seasons. It's an excitement due to the fact that our guys who have qualified can compete with the top tier of wrestlers in the state. We're not just going to be looking to make a trip to Salina; we're going to be looking to win some medals."

The Wildcats displayed some competitive fire throughout the tournament and Vance was front and center. He opened the tournament with a 29 second pin of Iola's Colton Toney and then advanced to the semifinals where he defeated Paola's Jaymes Carter in a 3-1 decision.

Vance (26-7) then faced off with Christy, who he had lost to a week earlier at the Frontier League meet, and was able to get some revenge with his quick pin.

“You know, I am just really excited that we were able to get five guys to state,” Vance said. “We haven’t had that many qualify at one time in a while and it is pretty cool to be able to be a part of that.”

Just like Vance, Wrigley is in his third year with the program and was able to qualify as a senior, which made the moment a little more special for him.



Louisburg senior Brenton Wrigley celebrates his victory in the consolation semifinals Saturday during the Class 4A regional tournament at Louisburg High School.

Wrigley, who is ranked No. 5 in Class 4A at 195 pounds,

reached the semifinals after a major decision over Ottawa's Garrett Gross. In the semis, however, Wrigley (34-7) got caught by Chanute's Alex Son for a first period pin.

He came through the back side of the bracket with a 3-1 decision over Paola's Jake Miller to earn a spot at state and then finished it off with a 5-1 decision over Frontenac's Kylan Dixon to take third overall.

"To qualify for state my senior year is great," Wrigley said. "I came into the season expecting to qualify for state and now it is here. I am not satisfied though. I still want a state medal and that is what I am going to try and get."

Keegan had to travel a different road than some of the others as he was on the junior varsity a year ago and wasn't even the team's 113-pounder on varsity to start the year. But due to an injury early in the year, he took the spot and never looked back.



Louisburg sophomore Nathan Keegan works for a pin Saturday in the consolation semifinals.

He started the tournament with a pin in the quarterfinals before losing a tough 6-4 decision to Independence's Carl Jesse. Keegan (29-17) rebounded to pin Osawatomie's Kitana Diediker in the first period to earn a spot at state and then went on to take third after he pinned Columbus' Nate Thomas in 4 minutes and 13 seconds.

"Nathan has been surging with confidence all season," Bovaird said. "He spent most of last season at JV behind David Bindi, and this year he started at a weight where he didn't have to do much weight-cutting. When David's season was ended by a second concussion, Nathan jumped on the chance to move down to 113. He's been pretty dominant there ever since."

Although he may be just a freshman, Adams has plenty of experience behind him as he has wrestled in the kids' club for several years. He used that tournament experience to earn a third-place finish.

Adams (35-10) nearly found himself in the championship match, but lost a 12-11 decision to Frontenac's Brandon Miekus in a match that went back and forth. Instead of sulking, he rebounded to beat Columbus' Zach Porter in a 7-4 decision in the consolation semis and then pinned Fort Scott's Zarek Fewell in the second period.



Louisburg freshman Ryan Adams qualified for state at 138 pounds and was one of five Wildcats to advance to state this weekend in Salina.

“I really wasn’t nervous at all,” Adams said. “That semifinal match was a little frustrating because I had beaten (Miekus) in kids club before and I didn’t wrestle as well as I should have.

“I am still excited about qualifying for state and I think we are really coming together as a team right now and I am happy to be a part of it.”

According to Bovaird, it appears Adams can even tell the future.

“With Ryan, I’m very happy with how he’s come along,” Bovaird said. “After he won the match to qualify for state, he gave me a big hug and reminded me of a promise he’d made a year ago – he’d be a state qualifier for the Wildcats.”

Looking at just the wins, it wasn’t surprising Koechner will make the trip to state. At 220 pounds, he currently has a record of 38-12, which leads the team, but had a tough road.



Mason Koechner, a Louisburg sophomore, pinned his way to state with four victories over the two-day tournament, all by pin.

Koechner took the challenge head on as he recorded all four of his wins in the tournament by pin, including a pin of Chanute’s Gage Clark in the consolation semifinals to secure his state bid. The Louisburg sophomore wrestled six matches in two days, the most on the team and eventually finished fourth

after falling to Paola's Dunkan Watrous in the third-place match.

"The one thing about it was there was no easy match or round," Koechner said. "Every match was tough and there was some good competition. It feels good to make the trip to state and I know it is only going to get harder."

Louisburg nearly got two more to state, but sophomore Lyndon Smith (182) and freshman Tucker Batten (126) each fell in the consolation semifinals to end their season.

Smith battled in the back side of the bracket as he found himself down big in two matches Saturday, only to fight back and pin both opponents to reach the consolation semis.

"Lyndon showed that he is a dangerous wrestler," Bovaird said. "In two of his matches Saturday, he was losing to wrestlers who were more experienced, but he kept battling and caught and pinned both of them. We thought he'd have a good shot at upsetting his last opponent and making it into state. You never know – weird things happen in February. Lyndon came close to making it happen. He came off the mat after his last loss with a smile on his face. He knew he'd given it his best shot, that he'd gone further than anyone would have expected him to go.

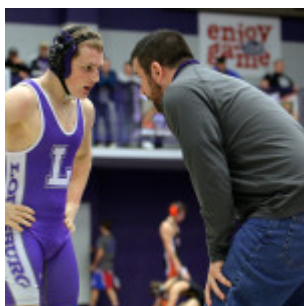
"I've been able to work with Tucker since his seventh-grade year, and I've always known he is a talented wrestler. He won three matches at the regional tournament, and he's been a freshman stuck in a tough weight class all season. He's taken his lumps, but he's also come pretty far. I'm excited to see what he can accomplish the next three years now that he's got a year experience under his belt."

On what was a day for celebration, the Wildcats had to say goodbye to senior Zach Knox, who finished with a 21-14 record at 132 pounds after losing his first consolation match Saturday.

“His loss was the toughest to handle. Zach is a kid who started as a freshman and really caught on to the sport. As a freshman, he got a good amount of experience on varsity, but was stuck behind Cullen Hood, Austin Hood, and Austen Scott,” Bovaird said. “Then, as a sophomore and junior, he really made huge strides forward. Over the years, he’s got his name in our record books for the Top 5 in several season and career records.

“He was a captain this year, won the Topeka tournament, and was seeded in a good spot to qualify. When he got eliminated from the tournament, it really broke my heart for him. We both shed a lot of tears out in the hallways after that. I’m very proud of what he’s done in high school sports, and I’m really thankful for him being a part of the program. He’s the only member of the class of 2015 who stayed with wrestling all four years.”

Wildcats gear up to host regional tourney



For some wrestlers, this weekend’s Class 4A regional tournament will mark the end of the season.

As for Louisburg, it hopes it will have several wrestlers compete a week longer. Louisburg will host the regional

tournament beginning at 3 p.m. today and will continue at 11 a.m. Saturday.

Sixteen teams will compete at the two-day tournament in which the top four in each weight class will qualify for next weekend's state tournament in Salina.

"We are very excited," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "This is my first being involved in hosting a regional tournament, and I think it's been a long time since we've ever hosted, if we've ever hosted one at all. The team is excited to have this tournament in our home gym. We'll have a home crowd, lots of fans and family members here to cheer us on."

After not qualifying anyone for the state tournament the last two seasons, the Wildcats are primed to break that streak this year and have a chance to send several. Regional seedings were recently announced and Louisburg has seven wrestlers seeded in the top 6.

Louisburg senior Brenton Wrigley, who is currently the No. 5-ranked wrestler in the state at 195 pounds, is the No. 1 seed in his weight class. Junior heavyweight Anders Vance is the No. 2 seed at 285 pounds.

Nathan Keegan (No. 3, 113 pounds), Ryan Adams (No. 3, 138), Mason Koechner (No. 4, 220), Thad Hendrix (No. 5, 106), Zach Knox (No. 5, 132) and Lyndon Smith (No. 6, 182) all have put themselves in position to qualify if they wrestle well.

"I'm excited for the kids," Bovaird said. "They've been working so hard for this. After all we've had to overcome this season, I want nothing more than for their hard work to pay off. We've been talking about mindsets the last few weeks. There are three principles we've been focusing on: we don't care who we wrestle, we can beat anyone and there's nowhere else we'd rather be than right here and right now. This is the fun and exciting time of the season. All the guys need to do now is step on the mat, pull the trigger, and do the things

they know how to do on the mat.”

The regional will be a very competitive one, however. Teams making the journey to Louisburg are: Labette County, Chanute, Coffeyville-Field Kindley, Columbus, Fort Scott, Frontenac, Anderson County, Independence, Iola, Prairie View, Osawatomie, Ottawa, Paola, Parsons and Spring Hill.

Three of those teams are also ranked in the top 10, including No. 1 Chanute, No. 3 Prairie View and No. 10 Osawatomie, along with numerous state-ranked wrestlers.

“Independence has several ranked wrestlers, along with Spring Hill and Columbus,” Bovaird said. “It’s a tough regional, all right. Regionals in Class 4A are always very tough. Each year, we see kids not qualify when they had been ranked all year, they were qualifiers last year, or even state placers last year.”

The order of events has been set for today and will proceed as follows: first round, quarterfinals, consolation round one and then championship semifinals. The rest of the tournament will resume tomorrow morning.

Louisburg Sports Zone will also be in attendance taking pictures of all 16 teams. For those interested in purchasing photos, they will be available at louisburgsportszone.smugmug.com a few days following the tournament.

Wrigley wins league crown at

195 pounds



Louisburg senior Brenton Wrigley won the 195-pound weight class Saturday at the Frontier League Dual Tournament in Eudora. Wrigley is now the No. 5 ranked wrestler in Class 4A in his weight class.

EUDORA – Brenton Wrigley is trying to end his Louisburg wrestling career on a good note and he is already well on his way to doing that.

In his first, of what Wrigley hopes to be his final three tournaments, he stood on top of the medal stand. Wrigley, a senior, won the 195-pound title Saturday at the Frontier League Dual Tournament in Eudora.

Wrigley was one of four Wildcat wrestlers to earn spots in the top two. In the process, he and the rest of the Louisburg team put together a strong showing of their own as the Wildcats finished third with a record of 4-2.

Louisburg couldn't have asked for a better start to the tournament. The Wildcats opened with victories over Ottawa (40-31) and Spring Hill (42-40) on Friday and then followed it up with wins over De Soto (54-25) and Eudora (54-27).

The schedule quickly got more difficult as Louisburg faced off with the state's No. 2 ranked team Baldwin next and fell 51-27. Baldwin rolled to the league championship with a 6-0 mark.

Next up was rival Paola and the Wildcats came up just short in a 41-30 loss. Louisburg trailed just 32-30 heading into the 220-pound match, but suffered a close loss at 220 and was open at 285.

Wrigley posted a 6-0 record, but three of those wins were big and all came Saturday. Wrigley upset De Soto's Jeremy Slitor with a pin in the second period. Slitor was previously the No. 5 ranked wrestler in Class 4A.

Baldwin's Gunther Wehrman was next and Wrigley held on for a 5-4 decision before edging out Paola's Jake Miller for a 3-1 decision in overtime.

After his performance, Wrigley is now ranked No. 5 in Class 4A at 195 pounds by the Kansas Wrestling Coaches Association.

The Wildcats also got good tournaments from Nathan Keegan (113 pounds), Tucker Batten (126) and Ryan Adams (138) who finished second in the league with just one loss each. Zack Knox (132), Lyndon Smith (182) and Mason Koechner (220) each finished in third place.

All four of Keegan's wins came by pin and three of those were under a minute. His lone loss came thanks to Eudora's Elijah Kennedy, the eventual champion and Keegan was pinned in the third round.

Three of Batten's victories were also by pin and all three were under two minutes, while Adams, a freshman, recorded four pins on his way to a 5-1 day.

Louisburg will host the 16-team regional tournament beginning at 3 p.m. this Friday and will continue at 11 a.m. on Saturday. The top four in each weight class will qualify for the state tournament.

Welcome to Louisburg Sports Zone!



Leave it to a children's movie to solve all of life's problems – well, at least my problems anyway.

It was a movie that led me to create the Louisburg Sports Zone website and start my own action photo business to coincide with it.

Before I get to that, let me take you back to seven years ago when I arrived in a small quaint town called Louisburg. It was a town I was familiar with as I grew up in Paola, but I never envisioned myself coming back to Miami County to raise a family.

Coming out of college, my goal was to make it big one day by getting a job at a large, daily newspaper and become a beat writer for a college team or professional team. I knew with hard work and practice that I could get there one day.

Well, two kids later and my priorities quickly changed – for the better. After stops at newspapers in Leavenworth and Atchison, my wife Jennifer and I wanted to move closer to family and when a newspaper job in the county opened up, I was offered the job and took it.

After I was hired, my family and I bought a house in Louisburg

and decided to make this our home. The place where we were going to raise our two kids, that eventually became three several years later, was a place we fell in love with.

Louisburg was our home, and at the same time, covering Louisburg athletics became my responsibility and one I didn't take lightly. Living in the same town I worked in was a first for me.

I got the chance to get to know the community and they got the chance to know me through my articles. I was lucky enough to cover Louisburg High School's first state football championship in 2010 and several other state title runs in other sports.

Getting a chance to know the kids, coaches and parents was something I will never forget. Unfortunately, all that ended for me a month ago when I was let go from my responsibility of writing about Louisburg sports.

I honestly didn't know what to do. It was my life for seven years and then all of a sudden I was going to have to find something else to do, something I probably wasn't going to like.

Trying to figure things out, I remember watching an animated movie called Big Hero 6 with my kids. It talked about when a problem arises, and you can't figure out a solution, try looking at it from a different angle.

So, ladies and gentleman, Louisburg Sports Zone is my different angle.

This site gives me the opportunity and privilege to write about athletic achievements in the area and continue doing what I love to do. It is a free service that I provide to you and one I hope you appreciate.

Hopefully, down the road, not too far, businesses in the area

will want to advertise here so that this can grow into something even bigger. For those who want to buy photos from events I cover, they can visit louisburgsportszone.smugmug.com and search through what I hope becomes several galleries.

I plan on covering athletic events at Louisburg High School and Louisburg Middle School, along with elementary-age activities. This page is going to be updated on a regular basis to give you the most up-to-date sports news and you won't have to wait 5 days or even a week to read about it.

Oh, and did I mention...IT IS FREE!!

I just want to say a big "Thank you" to my family for all the support and encouragement they have given me. I want to thank all the members of community who reached out to me on Twitter, Facebook or just picked up the phone during what was a difficult time in my life.

Also, I want to give a big shout out to Mr. Kenneth Sweeney, a senior at Louisburg High School who helped design this site for me and was there to answer all my weird questions. I appreciate everything and all the hard work you put into it.

When I moved here seven years ago, I figured I was never going to make it "big." I couldn't have been more wrong. I have definitely hit it big and this community is the reason why.

Wrestlers place seven at Baldwin



BALDWIN CITY – The Baldwin Invitational Wrestling Tournament features a gauntlet of state-ranked teams and wrestlers from across the state.

Louisburg seemed to handle that task just fine Saturday as the Wildcat wrestling team placed seven in the top seven to come away with their best finish in several seasons. Although Louisburg placed 10th in the team standings with 110 points, the Wildcats more than made their mark.

“This was our best performance at Baldwin since we started going there,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “I was there as an assistant coach when (Baldwin coach) Kit Harris began the tournament 14 years ago. It was a tough tournament then, and it’s only gotten tougher as the years have passed. We got 10th out of 17, but the range from 10th to fifth place in the team score was about 18 points.

“Any given match could have made a big difference had the outcome gone the other way. I’m pretty proud of how we stepped out there and wrestled. Several coaches whom I’ve known for years were pretty complementary about how the guys looked.”

The Wildcats had three wrestlers who were one win away from competing in the championship round. Senior Brenton Wrigley (195 pounds), sophomore Mason Koechner (220) and junior Anders Vance (285) each finished third.

Vance (22-6) was also honored with the Gorriarian Award, which was given to the wrestler in the tournament with the most pins in the least amount of time. Vance, who was 4-1 on the day, had four pins and two of them were under a minute. He seems to

be responding well after being sidelined with a concussion earlier in the year.

His only loss came to eventual champion Kasey Feyh from Wamego, who pinned Vance in the second period. A big victory for Vance came in the second round when he pinned De Soto's Caleb McQuality in overtime.

"Anders is having a pretty good run this season," Bovaird said. "The only major setback was the concussion that caused him to have to sit out two tournaments. I think he's back in the saddle and ready to go, however. He's been such a hard worker in the practice room.

"I've never had a wrestler win that award at a tournament before, so it feels pretty good knowing that we had a very dominant athlete. Anders just didn't match up with the Wamego kid, who's been ranked high at state all year. That kid had a long reach, and he was pretty mobile and fast, too. I think that with some work over the next two weeks, our coaching staff can get Anders ready for that kind of match. When it comes down to it, Anders is pretty fast and mobile, too."



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Louisburg junior Anders Vance works for a pin Saturday during the Baldwin Invitational Tournament.

Vance finished third overall at 285 pounds.

In the semifinals of 195 pounds, Wrigley matched up with Baldwin's Jake Katzer in one of the better matches of the day. Wrigley took Katzer, who is ranked No. 4 in the state, to two overtimes before falling in a 7-4 decision and handed Wrigley just his sixth loss of the year.

Wrigley (25-6) didn't let the loss get him down as he responded with a pin of Royal Valley's Jacob Box and then beat Wamego's Shawn Burns in a 4-2 decision for third place.

"We were all pretty disappointed with that loss, but it's great that Brenton is hanging with a kid like that," Bovaird said. "Two weeks ago, Brenton had a 5-3 win over the No. 5 ranked kid from Independence, and now he's going the full distance with another kid who's been ranked all year. Brenton is having some smart matches, and his confidence level is right where it needs to be. He believes that he belongs on the mat with these guys. I see no doubt in his eyes when he goes out to wrestle."

Koechner also left the mat at Baldwin with plenty of positives himself. He became the first Wildcat to reach 30 wins, not only this season, but the first Louisburg wrestler to reach that mark since Austin Hood and Austin Caskey did that in 2012.

The Louisburg sophomore pinned his way to victory in his first matches of the day before getting pinned himself in the semifinals against Smoky Valley's Jarod DeMott. DeMott, who is ranked No. 6 in Class 4A, pinned Koechner in the third period.

Koechner came back to win a 7-5 decision over Baldwin's Gunther Wehrman and then beat Abilene's Blaise Lehman in a 6-4 decision to finish third.

"His semifinals match was a tough loss against a strong kid,"

Bovaird said. "By the end of the match, you could see that both kids had been giving it everything they've got. That kid was a senior with just one loss, and Mason is a sophomore with a handful of losses, but also some pretty high-quality wins. I'm excited to see what Mason is going to do with this season, as well as the rest of his career as a Wildcat wrestler."

Nathan Keegan also had a strong outing for the Wildcats at 113 pounds as he finished fifth. Keegan won a 4-2 decision over Baldwin's T.J. Hopper in the fifth-place match and went 3-2 on the day.

Senior Zach Knox (132) and junior Bradley Trageser (285) both finished in sixth place, while freshman Ryan Adams (138) came in seventh.

The Wildcats, which have been plagued by injuries most of the season, now get a little chance to rest up as they get a week off before traveling to Eudora on Feb. 13 and 14 for the Frontier League Dual Tournament.

"We definitely need some time to recover," Bovaird said. "The month of January is always tough on a team, and this season has been one of the most trying stretches. We've lost kids to concussions, a car accident, appendicitis, broken ribs, torn knee ligaments and fractured vertebrae. Plus, it seems like the overall health has been a struggle this season – especially with all the little bugs that have been going around. We just need some time to relax, get refocused, and begin the long haul toward the end of the season."