

# Senior night special: Wildcats tame Cyclones



Louisburg senior Zach Jones locks arms with an opponent in the 152-pound match during Thursday's senior night dual against Ottawa. Jones recorded a 9-0 major decision and the Wildcats defeated Ottawa 41-33.

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Louisburg couldn't have asked for a better ending on senior night as the Wildcat wrestling team took down Ottawa for a 41-33 dual win Thursday at Louisburg High School.

The way the Wildcats did it made it all the more special.

Louisburg got big victories from seniors and underclassmen alike in a dual that wasn't decided until the final match. It was the culmination of a special evening that honored eight seniors and managers.

Anders Vance, Dillin Roberts, Chris Turner, Bradley Trageser, Zach Jones and Jimmy Dolan, along with managers Paige Shaffer and Alyssa Ellifrits, were honored before the start of the varsity dual with their parents.

"This is a great senior class to work with," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "I've had a chance to coach them all four years and I'm so proud of how they've grown. These guys have been a major part of the program foundation we've all been

working so hard to build. They've committed time in the off-season, they've been dependable leaders during the season, and they've made huge contributions to our season's success already."



**Louisburg seniors that were recognized Thursday are (from left) manager Paige Shaffer, Chris Turner, Bradley Trageser, Dillin Roberts, Jimmy Dolan, Zach Jones, Anders Vance and manager Alyssa Ellifrits.**

That success continued Thursday as the Wildcats improved their dual record to 10-3 on the season and they did it with contributions from up and down their lineup.

Ottawa was open at 106 pounds, so Louisburg freshman Hunter Bindi moved up to 113 pounds and scored a 12-1 major decision to give the Wildcats a few extra points and an early 10-0 lead.

After an open spot by each team, and a Cyclone pin at 126 pounds, Louisburg held a slim 16-12 advantage going into Turner's match at 138 pounds. The Wildcat senior provided a lot of excitement for the fans he was in a back-and-forth match with Ottawa's Dalton Welsh.

Turner found himself on his back many times during the match,

only to put Welsh on his back on several occasions. The scoring was so fast and furious that the official had to stop the match to sort out all the scoring.

In the end, Turner lost a 15-13 decision, but it was a key point in the dual for Turner not to let Welsh get the Cyclones more points with a pin.

“Chris lost a wild high-scoring decision, and the thing about that match is that he could have thrown in the towel and let himself get pinned several times,” Bovaird said. “He kept fighting the whole time.”

Next up, a pair of freshmen and a senior gave the Wildcats some breathing room.

Louisburg freshman Blue Caplinger won an 8-6 decision over Driestin Aho at 145 pounds, while Jones got the extra takedown at 152 points to score a 9-0 major decision. Freshman Austin Moore then responded with a 16 second pin of Tucker Mace at 160 to give Louisburg a 29-15 lead.

Ottawa made a comeback as they recorded three straight pins over Ben Hupp (170), Jacob Felder (182) and Lyndon Smith (195) to give it a 33-29 advantage. However, the Wildcats had the strength of their lineup waiting in the wings.



**Freshman Hunter Bindi puts an Ottawa opponent on his back during the 113-pound**

## **match Thursday.**

Junior Mason Koechner, who is currently ranked No. 3 in Class 4A at 220 pounds, reversed Ottawa's Brent Hornbuckle and put him on his back for a second period pin to give Louisburg a 35-33 advantage.

Ironically, it was a senior that sealed the win for the Wildcats.

Vance, the team's heavyweight, made quick work of Ottawa's Chander Adamson for the 23 second pin and dual victory.

"The guys wrestled pretty well last night," Bovaird said. "There were a couple of matches I wasn't feeling too great about, but looking back, I saw lots of positives from them.

"Ben not only got the first takedown on his opponent – a pretty tough kid – he also locked up a cradle and put him on his back. The last time Ben wrestled that kid, he'd been dominated and lost a major decision. Hunter bumped up to get us more team points at 113, Blue held on for a tough decision at 145, and Zach went the extra mile at 152 to get a major decision instead of just a regular decision. We also got solid pins from Austin, Mason and Anders. It was a great team effort by all the guys."

Louisburg also scored a 24-21 victory in the junior varsity competition.

Tanner Belcher recorded a pin at 120 pounds to get Louisburg off to a good start and Jaylen Boileau won a 7-0 decision at 145 pounds. Brandon Cooper (152) and Garrett Caldwell (182) picked up pins while senior Dillin Roberts (170) won a 10-5 decision.

The Wildcats don't have much of a break as they travel to the Baldwin Invitational on Saturday, but then return to action next week for their final home appearance.

Louisburg will host Lawrence High at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday. Prior to the dual, the team will recognize Louisburg wrestling alumni for the team' wrestling homecoming event.

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## Wildcats wrestle tough at Parsons Duals



PARSONS – It was Friday night and the Louisburg wrestling team found itself in a different situation than most weeks.

Instead of competing in a usual Saturday tournament setting, the Wildcats traveled to Parsons to participate in a tournament that saw them compete in five duals in one night. It made for an exhausting ride home, but it was well worth it.

Louisburg finished second overall at the Parsons Duals as they took a 4-0 record into the championship match against Lebanon, Mo., before eventually falling 42-29.

This was the third consecutive season for the Wildcats to compete at Parsons and Louisburg head coach Bobby Bovaird could tell a big change out of his group.

“Ultimately, we had a great night of wrestling at Parsons,” Bovaird said. “We gave Lebanon a much better dual this year than in the past, winning 6 of 14 matches. Last year, the score was 63-15 and we only won three matches. We lost by

points instead of pins. It shows we're stepping up and being more competitive than we've done in the past."

The Wildcats asserted themselves early as they defeated the Lebanon junior varsity to open the dual tournament with a 43-27 victory. Louisburg went on to roll Labette County (74-3) and Parsons (56-15) before rallying for a big victory (37-29) over Wichita West.

Louisburg had four wrestlers go undefeated on the evening. Freshman Hunter Bindi (106), senior Zach Jones (152), junior Lyndon Smith (195) and junior Mason Koechner (220) were all perfect.

Bindi recorded five wins with two pins and a major decision. Smith and Koechner each had five wins as well with four and three pins, respectively. Jones was a 3-0 with a pin and a major decision.

Junior Nathan Keegan (120), junior Jacob Felder (182) and senior Anders Vance (285) each finished with a 4-1 record to lead the Wildcats. Keegan had four pins, Vance had a pair of pins and Felder had a technical fall and a major decision.

"The last two years, we've gone up against some teams that had multiple open weight classes, so a lot of our wins had been forfeits," Bovaird said. "This year, every team we faced – with the exception of Parsons – had nearly full line-ups. That means our victories were earned.

"Lyndon, Hunter, and Mason each had a forfeit, but the rest were legit matches. It's a huge confidence booster for them. Zach had a pretty good day, splitting time with Connor Green at 152, and Jacob got in some great mat time. This point in the season, we just want a lot of matches for the boys."

As for Vance, it marked the third week in a row he had to go up against Parsons' Keenan Dodd, who is ranked No. 2 in Class 4A. The first two times Vance and Dodd squared off, he was

able to pin Vance, but this time the Louisburg senior was a tougher out as he lost a 5-3 decision.

"It's tough to beat a kid 2-3 times in a season," Bovaird said. "We'll see the Parsons kid again. A major lesson Anders learned is that the third period is crucial in a match against a kid like that. We saw some weaknesses and I think come regionals, Anders will be ready to get the win against him."

Maybe the most competitive match of the night came against Wichita West as Louisburg found itself down 24-9 early in the dual before the Wildcats starting chipping away. Junior Conner Green won by decision at 152 pounds and Wichita West was open at 160 pounds to make it just a 24-18 deficit for Louisburg.

Wichita West picked up a pin at 170 pounds to extend its lead to 12, but Felder won by major decision at 182 pounds and Smith got a big pin at 195 pounds to make it just a two-point match. Koechner won a tough 3-1 decision at 220 pounds to give the Wildcats a 31-30 lead.

The match would come down to Vance and Wichita West heavyweight Zane McPherson and Vance pulled out the victory for his team. Vance won by pin in a high-intensity match that eventually cost Wichita West a team point for unsportsmanlike conduct.

"In a dual like the Wichita West one, it came down to the heavyweight match, but everyone had a hand in getting us the dual win," Bovaird said. "Nathan Keegan and Blue Caplinger had key matches. Wichita West is full of tough kids who know how to pin. I told the guys that if we wanted to win that dual, we had to keep the scores close and stay off our backs. Those two wrestled very tough against good opponents.

"Bindi, Jones and Koechner won clench matches, too. Throughout the dual, we won some key bonus points – Felder got a major decision instead of a regular decision, and we picked up pins from Kyle Allen, Smith and Vance. It was a competitive dual,

and I was pretty proud of the guys for how they did. They carried themselves like winners and young men, and they didn't lose their heads and do anything to cost us valuable team points."

Against Lebanon in the final dual, Bindi got Louisburg off to a good start with a 12-3 major decision and Keegan followed with a first period pin to put Louisburg up 10-4. However, Lebanon rattled off four wins in a row to take a 24-10 lead.

Jones responded to win by decision at 152 pounds, but Lebanon recorded three straight pins to go up 42-13 and all but seal the win. Following the match, the Wildcats now have a 9-3 dual record on the season.

Louisburg will hit the mats two times this week as it hosts Ottawa for a dual Thursday, which is the Wildcats' senior night. Matches are set to begin at 5:30 p.m.

The Wildcats will travel to the Baldwin Invitational on Saturday as they get back into tournament action. Matches are set to begin at 9 a.m.

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## Wildcats win first team title in six years



Louisburg freshman Austin Moore pins an opponent during the



**Wildcats' dual with Gardner-Edgerton on Wednesday. Moore was one of five individual champions to come out of the Topeka High Invitational on Saturday. In the process, the Wildcats won their first team title in six years.**

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TOPEKA – For the first time in six years, the Louisburg High School wrestling team returned home as champions.

The Wildcats ventured to the Topeka High Invitational on Saturday and left with their first team title since the 2009-10 season. Louisburg racked up 204.5 points and blew away the 10-team field.

Topeka High was runner-up with 139 points and Highland Park was third with 112.

“Going to a meet like Topeka allows for so many of our guys to have success,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “This was a huge team effort – bringing home our first team title in six years was phenomenal. I don’t care about the level of the tournament. For these guys, they’ve never experienced that. They’ve never been to the top of the mountain, so having them work together to do that was a major step forward for the program.

“Every Louisburg wrestler scored team points or blocked other teams from scoring. We had three junior varsity wrestlers compete unattached, and one of them placed in the top three. We had four freshmen place in the top four, with two of them winning titles. Three sophomores and six juniors also wrestled. We’re still young, and that bodes very well for the future.”

Along with the team title, five Wildcat individuals also found their way to the top of the medal stands. Freshman Hunter

Bindi (106 pounds), sophomore Tucker Batten (132), freshman Austin Moore (160), junior Austin Raetzel (182) and junior Mason Koechner (220) all won their respective weight classes.



**Louisburg sophomore Tucker Batten won the 132-pound bracket Saturday at the Topeka High Invitational.**

In all, Louisburg had 14 of its 17 wrestlers place in the top four.

Bindi (20-5), who was close to getting that first place medal a couple different times this season, put together a strong performance as he went 4-0 with a pair of pins. He also earned a technical fall and defeated Topeka High's JP Gallegos in a 4-1 decision to complete his undefeated day.

As for Batten (11-10), he picked the perfect time to not only win his first varsity tournament of the season, he also got his first medal of the year. He defeated Council Grove's Chase Corgill by a 13-3 major decision to open the tournament and then defeated Holton's Lawson Henry by a 5-1 decision to reach the championship match.

In the first-place match, Batten held off Topeka's Conner Champney in a 4-2 decision to finish his best day as a Wildcat.

Moore (15-9) also earned his first varsity medal of the season

as he breezed through the 160-pound class with pair of pins to start and then defeated Highland Park's Myles Dean by an 8-4 decision in the title match.

At 182 pounds, Raetzel (12-6) pinned his way to win his first varsity tournament with a 3-0 record on the day, while Koechner (21-4) did the same in the 220-pound bracket.

"I think it's huge for two freshmen and a sophomore to win a varsity championship," Bovaird said. "Bindi has been close in previous tournaments, but this was Moore's first varsity medal and Batten's first medal of this season. For all three, it was a huge morale booster. Hunter has consistently proven himself one of the toughest freshmen 106 pounders in the area. Moore is the type of kid who is going to make some waves later in the season. Batten has been in a tough weight class all season, and one major thing he needed now was a surge in confidence. The way he wrestled this weekend, I think he got just what he needed.

"Raetzel has had some success already this season, and this was a great boost for him, too. Come regionals, I think he'll be in a good position. Koechner is getting some good mat time. I don't see him getting complacent in his matches; instead, I see him trying new things. He's always working on getting himself into better positions and using better techniques."

Junior Lyndon Smith also made his way to the championship match at 195 pounds, but was pinned by Gardner-Edgerton's Tristen Martin. Before then, Smith recorded three pins of his own to improve his record to 7-5 on the season.

Senior heavyweight Anders Vance also advanced to the first-place match with pins of Holton's Clay Baumgartner and Washington's Isaiah Vigil. Vance (23-5) was later pinned by Parsons' Keenan Dodd to finish runner-up.

Sophomore Thad Hendrix (113 pounds), junior Nathan Keegan (120), senior Chris Turner (138), freshman Blue Caplinger

(145) and senior Dillin Roberts (160) came in third overall. Freshman Brandon Cooper (152) and junior Conner Green (170) finished fourth.

The tournament was also a big victory for Bovaird, who is a Topeka native.

"It was a proud moment for me because Topeka is my hometown and I had coached there for eight years before coming to Louisburg," Bovaird said. "The Topeka West and Highland Park coaches were coaching back when I was in high school, and the Topeka High coach is a good friend of mine and a long-time high school rival. He and I battled back and forth on the mat all through high school. There's still a lot of Topeka wrestling families at that tournament, and I was just really proud to bring our Louisburg Wildcats there and win the title."

Louisburg is now about halfway through its season as it will prepare for the Parsons Duals on Friday and then the Baldwin Invitational on Jan. 30. On Jan. 28, the Wildcats host Ottawa for dual, which is also senior night.

"There's always the risk of the guys becoming complacent, of thinking they can coast once they reach a peak in their season," Bovaird said. "What they need to learn is that there's a time to go 100 percent and there's a time when the body and mind need to recover. There's a huge difference between recovering and coasting."

"We've got a lot of tough tournaments still ahead of us: the Parsons duals, which will give us five tough matches; the Baldwin Invitational, which boasts some of the top 4A schools in the state; and the Frontier League Tournament, which will be 6 matches in two days, and our league is consistently loaded with some of the top individuals in the state."

## **LOUISBURG FALLS IN GARDNER DUAL**

Louisburg traveled to Gardner-Edgerton High School on Wednesday for a midweek dual with the Blazers, but the Wildcats came up short in a 47-21 loss.

After losing the first two matches, Louisburg junior Nathan Keegan (120 pounds) got the Wildcats on the board as he earned a win by a 4-2 decision. Following two more losses, senior Chris Turner (138) picked up a pin.

Freshman Austin Moore won by pin at 160 to keep the Wildcats close, but Louisburg lost its next five matches. Senior heavyweight Anders Vance ended the dual on a good note for Louisburg as he recorded a third-period pin.

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## **Koechner, Bindi take second at Wildcat Classic**



Louisburg junior Mason Koechner pins his opponent during a 220-pound match Saturday at the Lousiburg Wildcat Classic. Koechner finished second at 220 pounds and the Wildcats finished seventh overall at their home tournament.

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Mason Koechner was one victory away from winning the championship at 220 pounds at his home tournament.

The only wrestler standing in his way was a familiar opponent.

Koechner squared off with Baldwin's Jake Katzer during the championship match Saturday at the Louisburg Wildcat Classic. Katzer was ranked No. 1 in Class 4A at 220 pounds, but Koechner has wrestled him well several times in the past.

Saturday was no exception and Koechner took Katzer to the final seconds, before falling in a 2-1 decision to finish second overall. Koechner looked to have two points on a takedown late in the first period but was called out of bounds.

It was a scoreless match into the third period when Katzer got two points on a reversal. Koechner scored a point late on an escape, but couldn't get the takedown he needed.

Koechner (18-4) put together a strong tournament as he was 4-1 on the day with four pins and has since moved up to No. 3 in the Class 4A rankings.

"He competed with that Baldwin kid," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Seeing him lose 2-1 was tough. The match was definitely winnable, but that's where Mason has grown quite a bit from last year to this year. He's getting into those tight matches, keeping them close, and putting himself in a position where he can win a clinch match.

"Mason is coming along pretty well this season. He's working on improving his repertoire of moves – what he's comfortable hitting in a good match, moves that are effective and work well on good kids."

Koechner's teammate Hunter Bindi also found his way to the finals, but like Koechner, ran up against a top-ranked wrestler. Bindi, a freshman, faced off with Olathe South's Jace Koelzer in the 106 pound championship match and fell 17-1. Koelzer is the No. 1 wrestler in Class 6A.



**Freshman Hunter Bindi works for a pin at 106 pounds during the Wildcat Classic on Saturday. Bindi finished second overall.**

Bindi (16-5) still had a big day for Louisburg as he picked up three victories and all three were by pin, including a 12-second pin of Blue Valley West's Josh Goldstein to start the tournament. He also pinned Leavenworth's Spencer Janson in 55 seconds.

With his performance, Bindi is now ranked No. 6 in the latest Class 4A rankings.

"That Olathe kid was an All-American last summer in Fargo," Bovaird said. "We knew it would be a tough match. Hunter has been growing quite a bit. He's figuring out what works at the high school level. Having seen quite a bit of success at the youth level, he's learning to adjust his style. Each week we see areas of improvement. He's getting more serious in the practice room, and it's paying off on the mat."

As the team standings go, Louisburg finished seventh overall with 119 points in the 12-team tournament. Rockhurst, out of Kansas City, Mo., finished first with 197.5 points and Pittsburg was second with 191.

“It’s great hosting a meet, especially one that’s grown into a pretty competitive tournament,” Bovaird said. “We had the No. 1 ranked team in 4A (Baldwin) and the No. 5 team in 5A (Pittsburg), along with lots of ranked wrestlers. Our finals were pretty exciting to watch with some top-level wrestling.

“I love having the chance to showcase our facility and where our wrestling program is at with its development. I wish we would have had a better showing individually, but considering the caliber of wrestling, I’m pretty pleased with our performances.”



**Freshman Austin Moore works for some back points during the fifth-place match at 160 pounds.**

Junior Nathan Keegan also found the medal stand in what was a tough 120-pound bracket that featured two state-ranked wrestlers and two state qualifiers. Despite that Keegan (11-7), a returning state qualifier himself, finished fourth overall with a pair of wins, including a pair of pins to start the tournament.



The Wildcats also had several wrestlers who just missed out on a medal. Senior Anders Vance (285), freshman Austin Moore (160) and Thad Hendrix (113) all came in fifth.

Vance, who currently has a 21-4 record, was in a competitive bracket himself that featured four opponents who were ranked in either Kansas or Missouri. Vance picked up two victories to start the day with a pair of pins, but was pinned himself in the next two rounds by the eventual champion, Vincent Spalitto of Rockhurst, and runner-up Keenan Dodd of Parsons.

Vance won the fifth-place match as he pinned Leavenworth's Jordan Cogdill in 2 minutes and 46 seconds.

"Anders got stuck in a tough bracket, that's for sure," Bovaird said. "It was probably the toughest weight of the tournament. It pinpointed some areas we need to focus on. He'll see the Parsons kid again, and he'll see wrestlers with styles similar to the Missouri kids, too.

"Nathan's bracket was also pretty tough. He got after it for the most part. A couple brief lapses in some matches kept him from getting his arm raised."

Moore, a freshman, got off to a rough start losing his first two matches, but he responded in a big way. The 160-pounder won his last three matches.



**Thad Hendrix tries to throw his opponent from Wyandotte on Saturday during the 113-pound match.**

Moore (11-9) pinned Pittsburg's Keyth Waltrip in 2:22 and then followed that up with a 5-2 decision over Leavenworth's Drew Sachen. In the fifth-place match, Moore found himself in a battle with Tonganoxie's Cody Knight and escaped with a 6-5 decision.

As for Hendrix, he defeated Wyandotte's Janvier Irakoze by pin in 3:41 in the fifth-place match. Hendrix (5-7) also defeated Irakoze earlier in the day by a 15-10 decision.

Others wrestling for the Wildcats were Kyle Allen (126 pounds), sixth; Lyndon Smith (195), sixth; Tucker Batten (132), seventh; Blue Caplinger (145), seventh; Ben Hupp (170), seventh; Bradley Trageser (285), seventh; Chris Turner (138), eighth; Dillin Roberts (160), eighth; Austin Raetzel (182), eighth; Zach Jones (152), ninth; Jacob Felder (182), ninth; Owen Staver (170), 10<sup>th</sup>; Garrett Caldwell (182), 14<sup>th</sup>.

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## **Top 10 stories of 2015**



Here are the Louisburg Sports Zone Top 10 Stories of the Year. In each brief explanation of the story, there will be a link

to the full story of when the event actually happened. Thanks again for a successful 2015 and I am already looking forward to 2016.



**Hogan Welch (left) and Wyatt Reece each qualified for state in their respective sports.**

### **10. Welch and Reece qualify for state**

LHS students Hogan Welch and Wyatt Reece each put together strong seasons in their respective sports.

In May, Welch qualified for the Class 4A state golf tournament after he shot an 85 at the Osawatomie Golf Course to become one of five individual qualifiers for state. It was the first time Welch had qualified for the state tournament and would shoot a 79 a week later in McPherson to finish 40<sup>th</sup> overall.

As for Reece, he qualified for the state cross country meet for the first time in his career in October. The Louisburg sophomore came in 13<sup>th</sup> overall and was also one of five individual qualifiers. A week later Reece traveled to Wamego to compete at the state meet and ran a 18:43 to come in 71<sup>st</sup>.



**Louisburg's Jimmy Dolan (left) and Mya Diacono each suffered major head injuries from an accident just days apart. The Louisburg community rallied together to help the two families.**

### **9. Accidents bring Louisburg community together**

Jimmy Dolan and Mya Diacono live in the same community but were worlds apart from each other.

Jimmy, a junior at Louisburg High School, loves to wrestle, hang out with friends and live the life of a teenager.

It was a far cry from 9-year-old Mya who loves soccer, horses and spending time with her fourth-grade friends at Broadmoor Elementary. In a town of less than 5,000 people, the two had never met.

Two tragic accidents changed all of that.

On Jan. 12, Jimmy lost control of his vehicle while driving to school and suffered a major brain injury. Just 42 days later,



Mya was involved in an automobile accident just outside the Louisburg city limits that left her with the same severe brain trauma.

That was when the Louisburg community came together to help the two families cope with a burden no family should have to bear. Since then, both Jimmy and Mya are on the road to recovery thanks to the help of a lot of people.



**Louisburg Soccer Club president Karin Olson (second from left), Louisburg High School junior Maddie McDaniel (middle) and fundraising organizer DIana Moore (right) receive the WIN for KC Sprint Teamwork Award on Feb. 13 in Kansas City, Mo.**

#### **8. Girls soccer raises funds to start program, wins award**

A fundraising committee made a big push to make sure there was a girls soccer program at Louisburg High School.

The committee raised \$39,000 in almost a year's time to fund the program for three years. Thanks to all the hard work, the group was also recognized by the WIN for KC organization. The

Lady Cats' soccer season will kickoff in late March.



**Louisburg graduates Kody Cook (left) and Garrett Griffin are each winding down their careers with their respective Division I football programs.**

### **7. Griffin, Cook wrap up college careers**

Louisburg High School graduates Kody Cook and Garrett Griffin have lived the lives a lot of football fans could only hope for.

Both are wrapping up their Division I collegiate football careers and are doing it with a lot of success. Cook is living his dream with the Kansas State football team as he has made contributions at both the wide receiver and quarterback positions to help the Wildcats to the Liberty Bowl.

Griffin, on the other hand, battled through an injury-plagued senior season to help Air Force reach the Armed Forces Bowl and made several big plays at the tight end spot.





**Louisburg quarterback Austin Terry was one of several players responsible for the Wildcats' turnaround this season.**

## **6. Wildcat football has big turnaround**

After finishing with just three wins a year ago, the Louisburg High School football team put together a strong season in 2015 as they finished with seven wins.

Those seven victories put the Wildcats within a game of Paola for the Frontier League title and Louisburg also earned a spot in the regional playoffs before falling to Basehor-Linwood in a tight contest.



**The Louisburg High School soccer team captured its first regional crown since 2010 after a 2-0 win over Coffeyville.**

### **5. Louisburg soccer wins regional crown**

Through much of the regular season, the Louisburg High School soccer team didn't have much to cheer about.

The Wildcats had just four wins during the regular season, but they seemed to find the right chemistry in the postseason. Louisburg rattled off three consecutive wins in the postseason, including a 2-0 victory over Coffeyville-Field Kindley in the regional championship.

It was the Wildcats' first regional title since 2010 and their sixth in the last 10 years.





**Anders Vance won a regional title in the 285-pound weight class last February as he was one of five Wildcats to earn state bids.**

#### **4. Louisburg wrestling qualifies five for state**

The Louisburg wrestling team hadn't been a part of the state tournament since 2012 – that is before last season.

The Wildcats put together a breakout season as they qualified five for the state tournament, while Anders Vance won the regional crown at 285 pounds. Brenton Wrigley (195 pounds), Mason Koechner (220), Nathan Keegan (113) and Ryan Adams (138) all made the trip to Salina for the Class 4A state tourney.



**Jeff Lohse (left) and Ben York each stepped away from their head coaching posts in 2015.**

### **3. Long-time coaches resign from post**

Jeff Lohse and Ben York had been fixtures in their respective sports for Louisburg High School, but both decided to call it quits this year.

Lohse, who spent the last 17 years as the head coach for the LHS baseball team, stepped down from his spot in May, citing personal reasons. Lohse led the Wildcats to two state tournament appearances.

York, who was the head coach when the boys soccer program started, also cited personal reasons for leaving the Wildcat soccer program after 13 years. York helped the Wildcats to six regional titles in the last 10 years.





**Connor McMullen won the state title in the discus back in May and became Louisburg's first track state champion since 2011.**

## **2. McMullen wins state title in discus, Dennis medals in hurdles**

Louisburg High School senior Connor McMullen finally got the state title in the discus he had been searching for.

McMullen recorded a throw of 173 feet, 1 inch on his final attempt to win the Class 4A state discus title in Wichita back in May. He would also medal eighth in the javelin with a toss of 164-02.

Fellow senior Sean Dennis also garnered a state medal as he took fourth in the 110-meter hurdles. The boys and girls team combined sent a total of 11 athletes to the state meet.





**The Louisburg High School volleyball team finished third overall in 2015 after making it to state for the fifth time in the last six seasons.**

### **1. Lady Cat volleyball takes third at state**

The Louisburg High School volleyball team has made a habit of making the trip to Salina in recent years and this season was no exception.

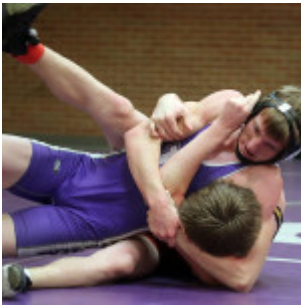
This time, however, the Lady Cats finished with a victory.

After ending their season with a runner-up performance and two fourth-place finishes at state the last three years, Louisburg won its final match of the season in 2015 as it defeated Tonganoxie in the third-place match.

The Lady Cats qualified for the state tournament for the fifth time in the last six years.

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# Wildcats finish runner-up at Tonganoxie



Louisburg senior Chris Turner squeezes Atchison's Spencer Vice during a 138-pound match Saturday at the Randy Starcher Memorial Tournament at Tonganoxie High School. Turner finished fourth overall and the Wildcats finished runner-up in the team standings.

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TONGANOXIE – The Louisburg wrestling team is only just three weeks into its season, but the Wildcats are already bringing home plenty of souvenirs to show off their success and it continued Saturday.

For the second time in three weeks, the Wildcats finished runner-up in a tournament – this time it was at the Randy Starcher Memorial Tournament at Tonganoxie High School. Louisburg was second in the team standings with 207 points and Shawnee Heights won the tourney title with 299.

To make it even better, the Wildcats had seven wrestlers finish in the top four of each weight class and five of them were in the top two.

"I'm pleased to be able to bring another plaque home for our display case, but I'm starting to get a little anxious about not getting that first place trophy," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "I think the team has grown enough that we can start chasing a team title in the near future. Overall, we had an outstanding team effort. All the boys chipped in and contributed team points, and each wrestler won at least one match."

Junior Mason Koechner had one of the more memorable tournaments of his high school career as he won the 220-pound weight class in dominant fashion. Koechner recorded pins in each of his five matches to move his record to 14-3 on the season.



**Junior Mason Koechner works for a pin during one of his five victories Saturday in Tonganoxie.**

He didn't waste much time either as he had the most pins in the least amount of time for all the wrestlers in the tournament. His five pins took him only a total of 6 minutes and 10 seconds.

"Mason had a great tournament," Bovaird said. "His championship match was against a Shawnee Heights kid who qualified for state last year and won a match at the state

tournament. This was Mason's first varsity championship of his high school career, and the team's first of the season. I am definitely proud of that.

"Each of his matches was a great opportunity for him to improve on the mat. He hit techniques we have been working on in practice, as well as moves I haven't seen him hit since middle school. He's opening up quite a bit and enjoying some dominance."

Freshman Hunter Bindi (106), junior Nathan Keegan (120), junior Austin Raetzel (182) and senior Anders Vance (285) all finished just one win shy of a tournament title of their own.

Bindi had two easy wins on the day with a pin and a technical fall, but faced a strong opponent in Shawnee Heights' Barrett Stickelman. It was a tight match into the third period, but couldn't come up with the final takedown in the 8-5 loss.

"Hunter's only loss was to a kid who was runner-up at the state tournament last year in Nebraska," Bovaird said. "It was a close match and Hunter thought he had an opportunity to score the winning takedown and he went for it. Unfortunately it didn't work out, but he saw an opening and went for it."

As for Keegan, he ended his day with a 4-1 mark, including two pins, a major decision and a 6-1 win by decision. His lone loss came to Tonganoxie's Korbin Riedel in an 8-0 major decision.

Vance pinned his way to four wins in the heavyweight division and all four of his victories were in 1 minute and 9 seconds or less. That set up a match with Schlagle's Tylen Wallace for the championship, and despite a tough battle, Vance was pinned in the third period.

"Nathan was pretty dominant most of the tournament, but he ran into a tough Tonganoxie kid," Bovaird said. "Anders really did have a great tournament. The finals match was a tough loss,

but he was aggressive and physical; it was just against a kid whose style and body type was something Anders wasn't used to seeing. We'll have one more chance to see that kid in a few weeks at Topeka."

Raetzel found his way to the medal stand for the first time this season as he had one of his best tournaments to come in runner-up at 182 pounds. Although he was pinned in the championship match, Raetzel rattled off three wins to start the day, including a technical fall of Tonganoxie's Kolton McCrary in the semifinals.

"Austin had some good matches, and the thing I like about him is that he's getting more and more confidence each time," Bovaird said. "He's a kid who thinks a lot – a very bright kid – and sometimes that's an obstacle for kids in wrestling. The more matches he wins, the more confidence he gets, and the stronger he is on the mat."

The Wildcats have also had to make changes to their lineup in recent weeks as they found out they lost one of their wrestlers for the season. Sophomore Ryan Adams, who was a returning state qualifier, suffered an arm injury and will have to sit for the rest of the season.

To take his place, Bovaird shuffled his lineup around and called on senior Chris Turner and freshman Blue Caplinger to step in. The changes seemed to pay a quick dividend as Turner and Caplinger each finished fourth to garner their first medals of the year.

Turner moved down to wrestle at 138 pounds, while Caplinger moved up from the junior varsity squad to wrestle at 145 pounds.

"Blue and Chris were both looking at JV roles earlier this season, with both of them being behind Ryan," Bovaird said. "When we looked at our potential lineup and saw an opening at 138, Chris was light enough that it wouldn't be a serious cut



at all. After we got news of Ryan's season-ending elbow injury, Blue has done a great job filling in. As a freshman, he's got an 8-6 record, which is pretty good considering the tough opponents he's been up against already.

"Both guys won some gutsy matches to get into the top four this weekend. Chris was put on his back by an Atchison kid, but then he got a surge of aggression after the guy cranked on his shoulder a little too much. Chris was able to channel his anger and catch the kid on his back for the pin. Blue had to beat a kid from Blue Valley Southwest, and won a smart 4-1 decision to secure his place in the top four."

The Wildcats take a little break for the holidays and then return to action on Jan. 9 for their home tournament – the Wildcat Classic. Matches are set to begin at 9 a.m.

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## Wildcats take fifth at strong Eudora meet



Louisburg High School junior Mason Koechner works for a pin during a 220-pound match Saturday at the Eudora Tournament of Champions. Koechner finished third at 220 pounds and the Wildcats finished fifth overall as a team.

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EUDORA – Every time Bobby Bovaird has taken his Louisburg High School wrestling team to the Eudora Tournament of Champions, the Wildcats tend to get a little better.

This year was no exception.

The Wildcats recorded their best team finish at Eudora in the program's history as they finished fifth overall with 182 points. Rossville won the tournament with 287 points and Maize South was second with 221.

Louisburg also brought its most wrestlers ever to the tournament as it just had one open weight class and several of those found their way to the medal stand. The Wildcats medaled eight over the two-day tournament that began on Friday and finished up Saturday.

"I thought we did pretty well last year when we took sixth and that was the highest Louisburg had finished since Eudora went to the 2-day, 24-team format," Bovaird said. "This year, I was very pleased with our team effort and had our highest finish ever.

"This year we were open at 195, but we were able to fill the rest of the lineup. Everyone scored points and contributed to our placing, even if they didn't win a match. That's what I like about a tournament like this one. It encourages and rewards teams who have full rosters. Four years ago, we brought seven wrestlers to this meet; only a few were ready for it. This year, we brought 17 wrestlers."

Freshman Hunter Bindi (106 pounds), junior Mason Koechner (220) and senior Anders Vance (285) all found themselves a win away from reaching the championship match. Unfortunately, all three had tough losses in the semifinals.

However, all three wrestlers battled back to finish third overall to lead the Wildcats individually.



**Junior Nathan Keegan lifts an opponent during a 120-pound match Saturday at the Eudora Tournament of Champions.**

Vance matched up against Spring Hill's Sam Christy in the semifinals and lost a 2-1 decision in the ultimate tie breaker, but rebounded to pin Lansing's Khalil Austin in the second period of the third-place match to finish his tournament with an 8-1 record.

As for Koechner, he ran up against Rossville's Kale Devoren in the semifinals and lost a 5-1 decision. But Koechner responded with back-to-back wins, including a pin of De Soto's Lawson Marshall in the third-place match to end his run with a 5-1 record.

Bindi also had a big day for Louisburg as he rattled off four straight victories before meeting up with Buhler's Adam Whitson in the semifinals. Whitson won by a 13-5 major decision, but Bindi bounced back to win by major decision over

Fort Scott's Tyler Gorman and then defeated Wellsville's Ryan Ware by an 8-3 decision in the third-place match.

Shortly before his semifinal match, Bindi watched as his brother, David Bindi, suffered a concussion during his 126-pound match. David was unconscious for a few seconds and was taken to a hospital to run tests. Other than the concussion, David should be OK, according to Bovaird.

"Hunter's semifinals loss was shortly after his brother's injury happened," Bovaird said. "That had to have taken his mind off his game. We were all pretty shaken up by it.

"Anders got caught in double-overtime, which is frustrating. Mason came up against a tough, physical kid from Rossville who had a wrestling style that Mason struggled with. We've got a lot to learn, but I'm glad to be so competitive in these tough matches this early in the season."

Juniors Nathan Keegan (120), Ben Hupp (170) and senior Bradley Trageser (285) each finished fifth overall and ended their tournament on a win.

Keegan defeated Fort Scott's Mannie Gonzales by a 3-1 decision in the fifth place match and ended the tournament with a 4-3 record. Hupp also won some big matches at 170 pounds, including a pin of Maize South's Koy Willms to ensure himself of at least a fifth-place spot.

Trageser won four matches on the day, including pins of Ottawa's Chandler Adamson and De Soto's Jalen Christianson.

Senior Dillin Roberts (160) and junior Connor Green (170) each finished sixth overall, while David Bindi was eighth at 126 pounds. Roberts, Hupp and Trageser all wrestled unattached for the Wildcats as they already had wrestlers in their respective weight class, but all three came up big.

"We had three unattached wrestlers place in the top six,"

Bovaird said. "They didn't score any points for us, but they still blocked other teams from scoring. It's great that we have that kind of depth. All three of those unattached kids had several pins, too. Those would have been nice team points."

Louisburg will have one more tournament before the Wildcats depart for the holiday break. The Wildcats travel to Tonganoxie on Saturday for the Randy Starcher Memorial Tournament.

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## Louisburg brings home hardware from Fort Scott



Louisburg's Ben Hupp works to get some back points during his 170-pound match in Osawatomie on Thursday. The Wildcats defeated Osawatomie 53-18 in their season opener and then finished second overall Saturday at the Fort Scott Dual Tournament.

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FORT SCOTT – For the first time since 2009, the Louisburg High School wrestling team brought home some hardware from the Fort Scott Dual Tournament.

Despite a rough start against Blue Valley Southwest, the Wildcats rattled off four consecutive wins to finish second overall and record their highest finish at the tournament in six years. After their season opening dual win against Osawatomie on Thursday, the Wildcats are now 5-1 to start the season.

"I was happy to have the team get second place, and it's nice bringing home some team hardware," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "I just wish we could have been a little more competitive with Blue Valley Southwest. That dual was not a pleasant one. It's a great thing to start the season with a solid dual victory and then a solid team performance at the tournament."

Senior heavyweight Anders Vance led the Wildcats with a 5-0 mark on the day and three others finished with just one loss. Freshman Hunter Bindi (106 pounds), junior Kyle Allen (120) and junior Austin Raetzel (182) each had 4-1 marks, while Bindi and Raetzel recorded three pins each.

"Anders is doing great," Bovaird said. "I love his work ethic and his desire to improve. He's always asking questions and looking for ways to get better on the mat. I just wish he'd had more challenges last weekend."

"Hunter is a solid freshman, and I think he's going to have a pretty good season. He's got lots of experience, and he's got a competitive attitude. I thought Kyle filled in on varsity for Nathan Keegan at the last minute, and his one loss was the first match of the day, and it looked like he ran out of gas. Austin is filling in at 182 and he also did a nice job."



**Louisburg's Alec Maler works for a pin during the 138-pound match during Thursday's season opening dual in Osawatomie.**

Louisburg opened tournament action against Blue Valley Southwest and struggled from the start. The Wildcats fell 56-18 and didn't get their first victory until Raetzel pinned a Timberwolves opponent at 182 pounds.

"Talk about a wake-up call," Bovaird said. "We just didn't match up with them well at all. From the very start of the dual, they were getting us at every turn. We didn't win a match until Raetzel got his first pin of the day. They were open at 220 and 285, so that was really our only head-to-head win.

"I didn't like the feeling I got from that dual; we didn't seem ready and we looked too timid and rusty. It is best to get that out of the way early and we can use that dual as a great diagnostic for the season."

The Wildcats bounced back well as it came away with a 48-21 victory over Fort Scott and a 60-15 win over Anderson County. Louisburg didn't have much of a problem in its 51-16 win over Shawnee Mission West and would also defeat rival Paola 62-9.

Louisburg also had seven wrestlers finish the day with winning

records. David Bindi (126), Tucker Batten (132), Blue Caplinger (145), Austin Moore (160), Ben Hupp (170) and Lyndon Smith (195) all left Fort Scott with three wins each.

Zach Jones (152) and Chris Turner (138) also ended their day with a pair of victories.

"I knew we'd have some depth this season, and I'm very proud of the guys who stepped in to fill our line-up," Bovaird said. "I'm especially proud of the competitiveness I saw come out of several kids."

The Wildcats return to the mat Friday and Saturday when they compete in the Eudora Tournament of Champions. Matches are set to begin at 1:30 p.m. on Friday and continue into Saturday.

### **Louisburg rolls Osawatomie in opener**

Louisburg hit the road to start its season Thursday when it traveled to Osawatomie for a dual and it became evident early that the Wildcats wouldn't have much of a problem.

The Wildcats won the first four matches by either pin or forfeit to take a 24-point lead and they never looked back in a 53-18 victory over the Trojans.

Thad Hendrix (106), Hunter Bindi (113), Nathan Keegan (120) and David Bindi (126) all won their first matches before the Wildcats lost four out of the next five.

"We had some guys who probably weren't in the condition that they needed to be in, but it is the start of the season and it is hard to tell at this point where you need to be," Bovaird said. "You just have to go out there and compete, figure out how out of shape you are and work with it."

"We have a good handful of guys on our team that are just all heart. They have an incredible work ethic and very strong



wrestlers. If they are down by a few points in the third period, I am not really concerned because they are like the Royals were – you can never count them out.”

A couple of those guys were freshman Austin Moore and junior Ben Hupp.

Moore, who wrestled at 160 pounds, found himself in the middle of a back-and-forth match with Osawatomie’s John Diediker as Moore recorded several escapes to keep himself in the match. Moore came up just short in the 11-9 loss, but his attitude carried over into the next match with Hupp.

Hupp was also down to Nathan Hodges at 170 pounds, but he recorded a takedown and got some back points to win the 13-9 match and got the Wildcats back on the winning track.

Louisburg won the next two by forfeit before Mason Koechner won by an 8-3 decision at 220 pounds and heavyweight Anders Vance pinned Osawatomie’s Tim Duncan in 37 seconds to end the dual.

Kyle Allen (126), Bria Jensen (132), Dustyn Rizzo (220) and Bradley Trageser (285) also won junior varsity matches for the Wildcats and all their victories came by pin.

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## **Wildcat wrestlers ready for big season**



**Louisburg junior Mason Koechner, who is ranked No. 4 in the Class 4A preseason rankings at 220 pounds, is one of four returning state qualifiers for the Wildcats this season. The Wildcats return several experienced wrestlers from a season ago.**

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It was a season to remember for the Louisburg High School wrestling team a year ago.

Last February, the Wildcats took a big step forward in their program as they qualified five wrestlers for the state tournament. The good news for Louisburg, four of those state qualifiers are returning this season and are bringing an experienced group with them.

“Up and down the lineup, we’re looking strong,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “I have lots of guys with varsity experience, and there are several weights that are going to be battles to see who will wrestle varsity each week. I think we’ll have some depth with our lineup – the kind of depth we haven’t had in a long time.

“Last year, we earned three tournament plaques, but we have yet to come out on top with a team title. This year, I think we’re in good position to bring home a team championship.”

Three of the returning state qualifiers were named as captains for the upcoming season. Senior Anders Vance, along with juniors Mason Koechner and Nathan Keegan will be looked to

lead the squad, along with senior Dillin Roberts.

Koechner is looking to build off his state bid a year ago and the wrestling coaches across the state think he can do it. He is currently No. 4 in Class 4A at 220 pounds in the preseason rankings put out by the Kansas Wrestling Coaches Association.

Vance, the team's heavyweight, also cracked the preseason rankings at No. 6 in the state. Keegan (120 pounds), along with another state qualifier in sophomore Ryan Adams (145), will also have a shot to crack those state rankings at some point this season.



**Senior Anders Vance hopes to make a return trip to state this season. Vance is the No. 6 ranked wrestler in the heavyweight division in Class 4A.**

"We'll see how things go the rest of the season," Bovaird said. "I like what I see from these guys. I think that when it comes to pressure, they're going to be harder on themselves than anyone else will be."

There will be plenty of competition for a lot of weight classes this season, and the final varsity lineup will be decided tonight during the team's annual scrimmage as some of those classes will have wrestle-offs.

At 106 pounds, sophomore Thad Hendrix is currently competing with freshman Hunter Bindi, while Kyle Allen is battling it out with Keegan at 120 pounds. David Bindi and Tucker Batten will wrestle at 126 and 132 pounds, respectively.

Junior Dylan Meyer and freshman Brandon Cooper are battling for the 138 pound spot. Adams currently holds the top spot at 145 pounds, but senior Chris Turner, sophomore Jackson Owens and freshman Blue Caplinger are competing there as well.

Zach Jones, Roberts and freshman Austin Moore are battling at 160 pounds, while juniors Ben Hupp, Owen Staver and Connor Green are vying for the slot at 170 pounds.

Juniors Austin Raetzel and Jacob Felder will slot in at 182 pounds and junior Lyndon Smith will wrestle at 195 pounds. Senior Bradley Trageser will compete with Koechner at 220.

Bovaird likes the mix of experienced wrestlers and newcomers he has this season.

"We have some very athletic freshmen coming in this season," Bovaird said. "Hunter Bindi was a 2-time kids state champion, and he's placed in the top 6 at kids state several times, too. Austin Moore missed placing at kids state last year by one match, and Blue Caplinger also has experience at the state level. Tucker Batten and Lyndon Smith were each one match from qualifying for high school state last year."

The Wildcats also have a little different look on their coaching staff as well. Robert Ebenstein returns for his fourth season with the program, while Louisburg also welcomes Andy Wright as a new assistant. Wright was previously the head coach at Wellsville for six years.

So far there has been no change in the practice room, but Bovaird likes what he has seen so far and is excited for the season to get underway.

“Our guys have a great deal of confidence that I haven’t seen since I got here,” Bovaird said. “Last year’s successes have definitely enabled us to get started much more strongly. I think that the last few years, there’s been hope and enthusiasm to start the year – guys working their tails off because they hope they can earn a trip to state. This year, there’s more than that. There’s a confidence – a firm belief – that we can build from last year’s successes rather than just starting over and hoping for the best when February hits.”

The Wildcats begin their journey for what they hope is a successful season Thursday when they travel to Osawatomie for a dual. Matches are set to begin at 6 p.m.

On Saturday, Louisburg will then travel to Fort Scott for its first tournament of the season.

#### **2015-16 LOUISBURG HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING SCHEDULE**

Dec. 3		at
Osawatomie		6
p.m.		

Dec. 5	at Fort Scott Dual
Tournament	9 a.m.

Dec. 11	at Eudora
Tournament	1:30 p.m.

Dec. 12	at Eudora
Tournament	9 a.m.

Dec. 19	at Tonganoxie
Invitational	9 a.m.

Jan. 9	Wildcat Classic (at
LHS)	9 a.m.

Jan. 16	at Topeka High
Invitational	9 a.m.
Jan. 22	at
Parsons	
3:30 p.m.	
Jan. 30	at Baldwin
Invitational	9 a.m.
Feb. 12	Frontier League (at Spring
Hill)	4 p.m.
Feb. 13	Frontier League (at Spring
Hill)	10 a.m.

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## Opinion: Rough patch leads to new beginning



I am just going to come right out and say it, “I’m scared.”

Yeah, it is an unusual way to start out an opinion piece, but there is no two ways around it – I am petrified. But believe it or not, it is what keeps me going.

We have all had at least one point in our existence where our lives changed for better or worse. I have had more than a few of those in my life, but the latest one came on Jan. 9.

It started out like all the other Fridays over the last seven years. I reported to work, spent a few hours in the office getting ready for what was a busy weekend of prep coverage ahead. It was the first action after Christmas break and I was ready to get back into the swing of things.

That never took place.

My bosses came into my office early that afternoon to inform me I was being let go. The job of covering Louisburg athletics was no longer mine. I packed up my things, turned in my key, went home, punched the wall a couple times and cried.

I was scared.

After all the tears came the questions. How was I going to support my family? What am I going to do for a job? The list went on and on and I couldn't come up with many answers.

As it turned out, one of the worst experiences of my life turned into one of the best.

Thanks to a lot of prayers, and support from family and friends, I decided to start Louisburg Sports Zone. Yep, that's right, I went from being unemployed to starting my own business for the first time in my life.

Not exactly the best way to alleviate fears.

However, when I kicked off the site just a month later, I was overwhelmed with the amount of support from students at Louisburg High School, employees throughout the district, parents and several others who offered encouragement and supported my new venture.

I finished the last half of the winter season and all of the spring doing what I took for granted the previous seven years. I got the chance to cover Louisburg athletics again.

You know, this whole starting your own business thing might



not have been a bad idea after all. I would have never had the courage to go out on my own had I not been pushed in that direction.

Fast forward to the present and I am still alive and kicking, ready to start my eighth season of roaming the Wildcat sidelines with camera in hand, waiting to tell that next story.

This fall brings a lot of story lines to the Wildcat programs. The football team is looking to improve off its 3-win season a year ago and find its way back to the playoffs with a veteran group returning.

Volleyball is primed and ready to make its fourth consecutive state tournament this year after placing in the top four in the last three years. The Lady Cats return five seniors that have a lot of state experience and that bodes well for another trip to Salina.

The Wildcat soccer team returns an experienced group from a year ago as they try to crack the top of the Frontier League standings. The cross country team also has several returning runners who will try and qualify for the state meet.

There is a lot to be excited about when it comes to Louisburg sports, but for me personally, I am just fortunate enough to still be a part of it in a small way.

I take a lot of pride in what I do and I hope that it shows when you read stories or look at pictures on this site. I started this business knowing that I will never be rich, but it gives me an opportunity to continue to do what I love.

Thanks to all those who have supported me and for the more than 23,000 views on the site in the last six months. I have said it before, but I am extremely blessed to live in a community that supports each other through good times and bad.

Every day I am fortunate enough to be able to go to work and support my family doing what I know how to do. That is all I have ever wanted, so thank you Louisburg for allowing me to do it.

I am still scared, though.

It is that fear that drives me to do the best I can in what I do in my job and in life. I don't want what happened on that day in January to happen again and I will do everything to make sure it doesn't.

Right now I am living the good life. I have the opportunity to work for myself, support my family and do what I enjoy. I can't ask for any more.

I am living the American dream.

I just don't want to wake up.