

Wildcat wrestling earns split on Senior Night



Louisburg senior Will Showalter dives in on an opponent Thursday against Ottawa on Senior Night.

The home part of the Louisburg wrestling schedule came to an end Thursday as the Wildcats hosted both Emporia and Ottawa in a double dual.

Despite a loss to Emporia to start the night, the Wildcats bounced back and ended their home contest with a 74-6 victory over Ottawa.

It also happened to be Senior Night as the Wildcats honored 11 wrestlers and two managers during what was a special night on the mat.

Seniors Blake Oliphant, Greysen Dixon, Logan Henry, Will Showalter, Canaan Clayton, Mika McKitrick, Brayden Yoder, Ashton Moore, Miles Meek, Jay McCaskill and Jonas Briley, along with managers Lacy Burton and Kaylee Crooks, were all recognized in-between the duals with their families.

"I feel like every class is special to me, and that's no different with this group," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "What a phenomenal group of young men. They've truly set a high bar for expectations – on the mat, in the classroom, in other sports, and in life. Several of these guys have been wrestling continually since a young age, and some of them started as freshmen in high school. It's a very diverse group, experience-wise, but that changes nothing about how proud I am of them."

In the first dual of the night, Emporia jumped out to a big lead on the Wildcats and they nearly made a 30-plus point comeback, but fell just short, 40-36.

The Wildcats trailed 37-6, but sophomore Bryce Thompson (157 pounds) and senior Jay McCaskill (165) each earned pins. Emporia was then open in the next three weight and set up a winner-take-all in the heavyweight match.



Louisburg honored 13 seniors during Thursday's double dual against Emporia and Ottawa. Pictured (front row, from left) are Senior managers Lacy Burton, Kaylee Crooks, along with wrestlers Blake Oliphant, Greysen Dixon, Logan Henry, Will Showalter, (back row) Canaan Clayton, Mika McKittrick, Brayden Yoder, Ashton Moore, Miles Meek, Jay McCaskill and Jonas Briley

Louisburg senior Miles Meek forced his opponent to overtime in the 285-pond match, but lost by decision.

"Historically, Emporia has always been a tough-as-nails program," Bovaird said. "Their coaching staff includes a couple of guys that I knew from when I was in school, and they are Emporia alumni (head coach Brook Medrano, who won multiple state medals for Emporia, and Dusty Spaulding, a 4-time state champion for Emporia). I knew heading into this dual that their program would be tough.

"I felt like a couple things could have gone differently, which would have changed the outcome of the dual, but at the

same time, we got out there and competed with them. Almost got the dual win at the end, too. Exciting to say the least, but it gave us a chance to reflect and learn a few things about what we need to focus on doing for the final stretch of the season."



Louisburg senior Jonas Briley gets a pin during his Senior Night match against Ottawa.

Against Ottawa, the Wildcats put together a dominating performance as they lost just one match in the 74-6 victory.

The highlight of the dual came at 215 pounds, when Louisburg's Ashton Moore, who is ranked No. 2 in Class 4A, squared off with No. 4 Seth Ferguson. Moore dominated the match as he won by a 9-1 major decision.

"I was a little uneasy about that match going into it," Moore said. "Ashton had been sick on Wednesday, so I didn't know how

that would impact his performance. The good thing is that Ashton is the kind of kid who doesn't let a little illness impact his efforts.

"In his match, he looked like he'd been feeling absolutely great the day before. You couldn't tell any different. He was conservative when he needed to be, and he opened up when there was a window of opportunity. He's been laser-focused this season, and I'm excited to see where it takes him the next few weeks."



Louisburg senior Brayden Yoder earned career win No. 100 Thursday on Senior Night at Louisburg High School.

The final dual also brought about a special moment for Brayden Yoder. The Louisburg senior recorded career win No. 100 with a pin at 190 pounds, and improved his record to 25-6 on the year.

"How special is that, to earn your 100th career win at home on senior night?," Bovaird said. "I'm so proud of Brayden, who is a great kid with a solid head on his shoulders. He gets the job done in the classroom, on the football field, and on the wrestling mat. He truly is an incredible leader with a very bright future."

Yoder, Moore lead Wildcats with titles at Husky Invitational



Louisburg seniors (kneeling from left) Brayden Yoder and

Ashton Moore won individual titles last Saturday at the Husky Invitational at Blue Valley Northwest.

OVERLAND PARK – In what was one of their toughest tournaments on the season, a pair of Louisburg wrestlers brought home top honors.

Seniors Brayden Yoder and Ashton Moore earned individual titles at the 2-day Husky Invitational last Friday and Saturday at Blue Valley Northwest High School.

In all, the Wildcats medaled four wrestlers in the 21-team tournament that included three state-ranked programs. Louisburg finished eighth overall with 307 points.

“Once again, the Husky Invitational didn’t disappoint,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “We got into this tournament because we needed some tough competition to help prepare us for the post-season. That’s exactly what we needed, and it’s exactly what we got. All of our guys got some great competition that was at the level they needed.

“Overall, we had a pretty strong performance. We tied our highest performance with eighth place, but we also scored an all-time high with our team points. Also, based on the records I got when I took over as head coach, this was the first time we’ve ever had two champions, which is a pretty nice accomplishment.”

Yoder entered the tournament as the No. 1 seed at 190 pounds and he showed why. The Louisburg senior won his first five matches of the day by pin, including a semifinal pin over Rockhurst’s Chase Quinn.

That set up a match with Lawrence Free State’s Zane Shaw in the championship, and Yoder battled to a 2-1 sudden victory to improve his record to 25-6 on the season.

“In the championship match, Brayden was solid and disciplined with his neutral wrestling, which resulted in him getting a

couple of great stall calls against his opponent," Bovaird said. "He was very smart on his feet, and when they went into overtime and his opponent was trying to avoid wrestling him, that 'fleeing the mat' call was pretty indisputable."

As for Moore, he picked up a big victory of his own, but his came in the semifinals at 215 pounds. He squared off with Andover's Tate Hutchinson, who is ranked No. 3 in Class 5A.

Moore, who was ranked No. 3 in the state in Class 4A coming into the tournament, got a 6-3 decision over Hutchinson to advance to the championship. It set up a rematch with Topeka-Seaman's Deyton Mentzer, and Moore got the third period pin to win the title and improve his record to 25-2.

"Ashton did great throughout the tournament," Bovaird said. "The big match was actually the semifinals against Tate Hutchinson of Andover. That kid had beaten Ashton at this tournament every year since their freshman year – last year was a 3-0 decision in the finals. This year, Ashton had his number and stepped up big-time in the semis.

"In the finals, he had a rematch with a kid he'd beaten earlier in the tournament. Ashton did a remarkable job keeping his head and his focus against an opponent who was obviously trying to get him distracted and off his game."

The Wildcats also had two other medalists as sophomore Levi Cotter (106 pounds) and Mika McKittrick (132) had top six finishes.

Cotter finished in fifth place with a 4-3 record and had to battle his way to through the consolation bracket. In his fifth place match, Cotter earned second period pin in what was a revenge win over Andover's Jace Dryden.

McKittrick posted three wins in the tournament as he squared off with Blue Valley West's Scott Fohlmeister in the fifth place match. Although he was eventually pinned, it was still a

successful run for the Wildcat senior.

Louisburg seniors Jay McCaskill (165) and Miles Meek (285) each finished just outside medal contention as they took seventh and eighth, respectively.

"Levi finished the tournament with a revenge win against an Andover kid who'd beaten him by a major decision earlier in the tournament," Bovaird said. "Mika is having a great senior season, making huge strides from last year. He's really looking strong on his feet and on top.

"Jay had a very tough bracket, but he's showing that he's a dynamic and dangerous wrestler in any position, whether it's on his feet, on top, or on bottom. Miles is an under-sized 285-pounder, but he's doing a great job with his strength, work ethic, and athleticism. He's a very coachable kid, and he'll have a great conclusion to his senior year."

Louisburg is back in action Thursday as it hosts Emporia and Ottawa for Senior Night as the Wildcats honor their 11 seniors. Matches begin at 6 p.m.

Louisburg girls medal three at Wellsville tournament



Louisburg freshman Brianna Caraway finished third overall at 130 pounds last Friday at the Aaron Patton Memorial Tournament in Wellsville.

WELLSVILLE – It was just its second true tournament of the season, but the Louisburg girls wrestling team left the Aaron Patton Memorial Tournament with its fair share of hardware.

Three Wildcats earned medals as Brooklyn DeWeese, Brianna Caraway and Leola Eslinger all finished in the top four Friday at the tournament at Wellsville High School.

In the team standings, Louisburg finished ninth with 65 points in the 22-team tournament.

“I was really proud of all the girls overall with how hard they battled,” Louisburg coach Heather Eslinger said. “One of our obstacles this season is we have a team of only 11 girls, which isn’t even a full team. So we take our girls to any girl wrestling events that we can. Some of those are labeled JV, and some are varsity, and so we might have a JV wrestler

wrestling in a varsity event, which was what Wellsville was. There was a hard battle for a lot of these girls, who were wrestling way above their skill level."

Freshmen Brooklyn DeWeese (115 pounds) and Brianna Caraway (130) each finished third overall, and DeWeese earned her second varsity medal of the season.

DeWeese battled back from a first round loss to Jayhawk-Linn's Rowan Day. She rattled off four straight pins, including one in a rematch with Day in the third place match.

As for Caraway, she had a busy day with six matches, but she finished 5-1 in the competition and all five of her wins came by pin.

Caraway lost her quarterfinal match to Baldwin's Keziah Moses, but reeled off four straight wins, including a second period pin over Wellsville's Ava Yanez in the third place match.

"I was especially proud of Brooklyn and Brianna," Eslinger said. "Even though both of these girls are freshmen, they are at a varsity skill level, but they still had some tough battles. I was really proud of how Brooklyn didn't let that first loss in the morning get to her head and she overcame and won that match for third place."

"Brianna had even a little bit more of a tough day. She ended up having six matches, which even for a seasoned wrestler, is a lot of matches. She had some really tough situations that she had to battle back from. At one point she was on her back and coach Bovaird and I both thought that she was done for and she was going to get pinned. In a split second she had moved position and she came out on top with the win for third place."



Freshman Evelyn Rue tries to put an opponent on her back Friday in Wellsville.

Sophomore Leola Eslinger took fourth place at 145 pounds as she recorded a 2-2 day. After losing in the semifinals, Eslinger battled back to get a pin over Wellsville's Addy Gardner to reach the third place match.

In that match, Eslinger lost by pin to Jayhawk-Linn's Gracee Willard to end up in fourth.

Coach Eslinger saw a lot from her team as the young Wildcat group gained some much-needed experience.

"Some of the other girls that I was really proud of wrestling Friday at Wellsville was Nora Smith, who even though she went 0-2, she scored her first points, which is a great thing," coach Eslinger said. "It's always great to see progress even if it doesn't come out as a win. I was also really proud of Evelyn Rue. She was a brand new wrestler this year, came in November not knowing anything. On Friday she ended up having

her first two wins, which were both pins.

"I was just so proud that I could see those skills starting to click with Nora and Evelyn and they're starting to understand what wrestling is and where they need to be on the mat to score. It's only going to go up from here."

Wildcats capture Wellsville title to win second straight tourney



Louisburg senior Canaan Clayton gets a takedown during his 120-pound match last Friday at Wellsville. Clayton and the Wildcats won the Wellsville Tournament.

WELLSVILLE – The Louisburg wrestling team has done nothing but win in 2025 and that continued Friday at the Aaron Patton Memorial Tournament at Wellsville High School.

The Wildcats won their second straight competition to start the new year as they cruised to the team title with 210.5 points and beat runner-up Santa Fe Trail by more than 80 points in the 24-team tournament.

On top of that, the Wildcats also had three individual champions and eight finish in the top four of their respective weight classes. It was the second straight time Louisburg has won the Wellsville tournament.

“This year was a big improvement from last year,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “In 2024, there were a lot of smaller teams, smaller brackets, and mismatches in the finals. This year, the semifinals, finals, and consolation finals were much more exciting. Winning it last year was pretty neat, but this year it felt a whole lot better.

“The most significant element was that we went undefeated in the first round of the tournament, and in the second round we lost maybe three matches. That meant we went into the semifinals with quite a few wrestlers. You don’t get to that point unless you step up to perform.”

Seniors Canaan Clayton (120 pounds), Brayden Yoder (190) and Ashton Moore (215) all earned individual titles as all three dominated their weight class.

Clayton won all three of his matches by pin and did so in a minute or less. In the championship, Clayton pinned Santa Fe Trail’s Bryce Combes in 59 seconds to improve to 17-6 on the season. It was also his first career tournament championship on the varsity level.

As for Yoder (19-6), he won two of his first three matches by pin and then squared off with Gardner-Edgerton’s Dawson

Cassida in the first place match. Yoder battled Cassidy to a 10-5 decision to win the 190-pound bracket.

Moore (19-2) controlled the 215-pound weight class as all four of his wins came by pin, including a second period pin of West Elk's Joshua Patteson in the championship match.

"All three of them are really stepping up and performing well," Bovaird said. "Canaan got his first varsity championship of his career in style, winning all three matches by a first-period pin. Brayden wrestled so many solid matches, just being smart and staying in solid position. He really gave a lot of great examples of his wrestling IQ with those matches. He didn't force anything, he was smart by holding off some solid attacks, and with his positioning he made sure to capitalize on his opponents' mistakes.

"Ashton was an animal in his bracket. He took the time to work some new techniques and try some unfamiliar techniques. He's such a smart athlete, and he gets it. He's not afraid of making mistakes, and he's willing to use these live matches as a chance to work things to help him win those close matches in February when we get to the postseason."



Louisburg senior Jay McCaskill lifts an opponent Friday at Wellsville. McCaskill finished third at 165 pounds.

Sophomore Levi Cotter (106) and senior Jay McCaskill (165) each finished third in their weight class, while freshman Parker Showalter (113), senior Mika McKittrick and junior Vance Hahn (175) took fourth.

Cotter (20-5) went 3-1 on the day, with his lone loss coming by pin in the semifinals to Onaga's Jesse Miller. He battled back and won his third place match by pin over Jayhawk-Linn's Aedin McGregor.

McCaskill (17-3) was 4-1, with his only setback coming in the semifinals in a 10-4 loss to Shawnee Mission East's Noah Jewell. He bounced back and earned a pin over Burlington's Kyzer Lehmann in the third place match.

Showalter (10-15) went 2-2 on the day with a pair of pins. Both McKittrick and Hahn were 3-2, while McKittrick had three pins and Hahn had two.

Bryce Thompson (157) and Greysen Dixon (138) each took sixth overall. It was a good ending to a tournament that lasted nine hours before all was said and done.



Louisburg sophomore Bryce Thompson works for a pin Friday at Wellsville.

"Without a doubt, it was a long day," Bovaird said. "We're not used to wrestling that late at night, but that's a good thing. It's all about the physical conditioning and the psychological conditioning. I was really impressed with a lot of our wrestlers' performances. Parker placed at his first varsity tournament. Mika bounced back from a controversial semi-finals loss to make it to the third place match. In the semis, the official called a defensive pin while Mika was leading by quite a bit, and the thing that impressed me the most was how he kept his composure throughout the whole thing. I told him, 'You handled that loss much better than I did.'

"In the third place match, he was in control of his opponent

on the scoreboard going into the second period. We chose down, and the kid hit him with an illegal suplex. Mika was cleared by the trainer to continue, but after another flurry of action, I saw that he wasn't right, and I chose to default the match rather than risk any further injury."

Louisburg is back in action Friday and Saturday as the Wildcat take part in the 2-day Blue Valley Northwest Invitational.

Moore, Yoder lead Wildcats to home tournament title



Louisburg senior Ashton Moore works up a pin during the Louisburg Invitational on Saturday at Louisburg High School.

The Louisburg wrestling team didn't have much preparation for its home tournament Saturday as students missed several practices due to snow days following Christmas break.

It wasn't the best way to start 2025, but the Wildcats managed just fine as they won the Louisburg Invitational for the second time in three years and did so in convincing fashion.

Louisburg won the team title with 216 points and Blue Valley West was second with 153 points in the 14-team tournament. The Wildcats also medaled 10 on the day and had two individual champions.

"We had some adversity hit us last week – mostly with the weather and being unable to get in as many practices as I would have liked," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "At the start of the tournament, you could tell that our fitness was definitely working against us. I gave the team a pep talk after the second round and told them that if they wanted to get in the team race, they needed to get it set in their minds that everyone was battling fitness, not just us. It can't be an excuse for losing matches or making mistakes. They really turned things around after that."

Two Wildcats found their way atop the medal stand as seniors Brayden Yoder and Ashton Moore each won their respective weight classes and did so in different ways.

Yoder (15-6), who wrestled in the 190-pound bracket, opened with three straight pins that put him in the semifinals. Competition got a lot tougher as he squared off against Blue Valley Northwest's Blake Berry, a returning state qualifier in the semis.



Louisburg senior Brayden Yoder works for one of his three pins Saturday at the Louisburg Invitational. Yoder won the 190-pound bracket.

Berry and Yoder were deadlocked for most of the match, but the Louisburg senior recorded a 4-3 decision in overtime to advance to the finals. It was there where Yoder outlasted De Soto's Dylan Roy in a 3-0 decision for the championship.

"He won a great match against the Northwest kid, who was a state qualifier in 6A last year," Bovaird said. "Just a gutsy performance, getting that win in the tie-breaker. Brayden is in an awesome groove right now, and it's pretty exciting to see it. He's strong and confident, and he's got such a great wrestling IQ. This was his third time winning the Louisburg Invitational, which is a great feat."

Moore (15-2) earned the title at 215 pounds and created a little history for himself along the way. Moore recorded his 100th career win with a pin of Piper's Wyatt Koenig in the

quarterfinals.

He then recorded a 16-1 technical fall of Leavenworth's Montrez Cameron in the semifinals, which set up a match of state-ranked wrestlers in the championship.



Members of the Louisburg wrestling team celebrate Ashton Moore's 100th win Saturday at their home tournament.

Moore, who is ranked No. 3 in Class 4A, squared off with No. 5 Parker Schwarz of Prairie View for the title. Moore, who edged Schwarz at the Tonganoxie tournament before the break, earned a pin in the tiebreaker this time around to win the title.

"Last month when Ashton wrestled Schwarz, he weighed in at 190 after being pretty sick," Bovaird said. "This time, he weighed in at 211 – that 20 pounds makes a difference. Ashton was aggressive and smart on his feet, and I loved seeing him turn things up to a different level when he got on top of that kid in the tie-breaker. He's been working so hard and he's such a great kid. I was really proud to see him get win No. 100 on Saturday."

Along with Yoder and Moore, the Wildcats had four other

wrestlers reach the championship match. Levi Cotter (106 pounds), Canaan Clayton (120), Mika McKittrick (132) and Vance Hahn (175) all finished one win shy of a title and took second.



Louisburg sophomore Levi Cotter finished second Saturday in the 106-pound bracket.

Cotter (17-4) recorded three pins on his way to the championship match, including a first period pin of De Soto's John Legatt in the semifinals. Cotter fell in the third period to Blue Valley West's Zack Olsen in the championship, who has just one loss on the year.

As for Clayton (14-6), he opened the tournament with a win by technical fall, and then reeled off three straight pins, before falling by pin to Blue Valley Northwest's Parker Burk in the championship.

McKittrick (16-5) battled a shoulder injury to earn a spot in the title match at 132 pounds. The Louisburg senior recorded

four straight pins to advance to the first place match, but was pinned by Blue Valley West's Scott Fohlmeister.

Hahn (13-8), a junior, had his best tournament as a Wildcat as he recorded his first varsity medal. Hahn rattled off four straight wins to start the tourney, including one by pin and one by major decision. He squared off with Royal Valley's Avery Hunter in the championship, but lost by pin.

Louisburg's Keegan Rogers (126), Logan Henry (138), Jay McCaskill (165) and Miles Meek (285) also earned a medal as each finished fourth.

"They wrestled with courage and strength, which was a key part of our pre-match talk," Bovarid said. "They also showed they were able to overcome adversity as well. Mika McKittrick made the finals, despite having a bum shoulder. Vance Hahn not only earned his first varsity medal, but also made the finals at 175. Despite being an unattached wrestler and not scoring any team points, Keegan Rogers also earned his first varsity medal by taking fourth at 126."

The Wildcats will hit the mats again Friday as they compete at the Wellsville Invitational. Matches begin at 1 p.m.

Week 4 Athlete of the Week: Brayden Yoder



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week four of the winter sports season, sponsored by IronHorse Family and Cosmetic Dentistry.

BRAYDEN YODER, SENIOR, WRESTLING

Louisburg senior Brayden Yoder got out to a perfect start in 2025. Yoder and the Wildcat wrestling team took to the mats at the Louisburg Invitational last Saturday and Yoder came away with a first place finish. At 190 pounds, Yoder went 5-0 on the day that included three pins. He also recorded a big tiebreaker victory in the semifinals before earning a 3-0 decision in the championship.

It was the third Louisburg Invitational victory for Yoder in his four-year Wildcat career. Not only did he find success, but the rest of the team did as well as the Wildcats won their home tournament for the second time in the last three years.

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday morning during the winter season and the winner is selected by

Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.

Previous winners:

Week 1: Gavin Lohse

Week 2: Colin Brown

Week 3: Jay McCaskill

The collage features the Ironhorse Family & Cosmetic Dentistry logo (a purple horse head with a crown) and a QR code. It also features the Dr. Laura's Orthodontics logo (a yellow sun-like shape with the text "Dr. Laura's Orthodontics" and "LOVE YOUR SMILE") and another QR code. A photograph of a family of four (two adults and two children) is shown smiling. Text on the right side of the collage includes: "Comfortable dental care for the entire family", "No shots, no drills, no pain", "We offer sedation dentistry", and "Orthodontics, TMJ and Sleep Apnea Treatment". Address and phone number information is also present at the bottom.

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5321 W. 151st Street, Leawood, KS 66224 (913) 851-9969

1270 W. Amity, Louisburg, KS 66053 (913) 837-3096

Top 10 Louisburg Sports Stories of 2024



LOUISBURG SPORTS ZONE

It was a successful, and eventful, year for Louisburg High School athletics and for those who are connected to the Wildcat program.

This past year created a lot of school history for LHS and a few programs made their way to state competition.

Below are the top stories from 2024, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the writeup is the link to the actual story from the event.

When putting the list together, I took a lot of things into account – whether it was team vs. individual, popularity of the sport, historical achievements and the interest it drew on the web site.

This year was a blast to cover and I am looking forward to seeing what 2025 will bring. Thank you to everyone for their support and can't wait for it all to begin again.



Jordan Roquemore was hired as the new head coach of the Louisburg girls soccer program after serving four years as an assistant.

10. Coaching Changes: Willer steps down from LHS volleyball, Roquemore takes over girls soccer

Louisburg volleyball and girls soccer saw some big changes in their respective programs.

Over the summer, Jordan Roquemore was hired as the head coach for the Wildcat girls soccer program after spending several years as an assistant.

He became the third head coach in the history of Louisburg

girls soccer. He replaced former coach Ben York, who coached the Wildcats the last two seasons.

"I feel tremendously honored to take over as head coach," Roquemore said. "It's an amazing opportunity to take over an exceptional program with a great group of athletes, supportive parents and invested community members. I don't take the responsibility lightly, but I am also really excited."



Louisburg volleyball coach Leanna Willer is stepping down from her post after serving as head coach for the last four seasons.

On the volleyball side, head coach Leanna Willer submitted her resignation in early December.

Willer has spent eight seasons with the Wildcat program, including the last four as head coach. She accepted a new position as head coach at Olathe East.

"This decision is bittersweet, but deep down I know that this

is the best decision for me and my life," Willer said in an email to parents. "The team will move on, and I feel lucky that I could play a small part in the long-standing traditions of the program. To the alumni and class of 2024, I thank you for your commitment to this team and to this program, and for making my time at Louisburg unforgettable. To our younger players, I am sorry for not seeing your journeys all the way through, but please know that you have my unwavering support and I cannot wait to see what you all can accomplish with the time you have left as Louisburg Wildcats."



Louisburg junior Sabra Brueggen swims the backstroke during the prelims of the Class 5-1A state meet in Lenexa.

9. Brueggen wins state swim medal

For the third straight season, Sabra Brueggen left the Class 5-1A state swim meet with some hardware.

The Louisburg junior showed why she is among the state's best as she earned a fourth place medal in the 200-yard individual medley – her first ever state medal in that event – Saturday at the Shawnee Mission Aquatic Center.

The 2-day meet provided a lot of ups, and some downs, for the Louisburg swim program, but for Brueggen it was nice to return to the medal stand.

"I was very happy and content with my 200 IM swims last weekend," Brueggen said. "Not only did I set a new personal best time, but I also walked away with fourth place in an event that is not one of my primaries."

Janie Harth, Ella Bockelman and Cadence Weichert also joined Brueggen at the state meet as they qualified for the consolation finals in the 200 medley relay 400 freestyle relay.



8. Dixon achieves pro volleyball dream

It was setting up to be an epic finish to Anna Dixon's collegiate volleyball career.

Dixon, as a graduate transfer, made the move to the University of Florida for her final season and quickly made an impact on the Gators' roster.

Despite having to learn a new position due to an injury on the team, Dixon seemed to flourish. She helped the Gators out to a quick start and everything was going according to plan.

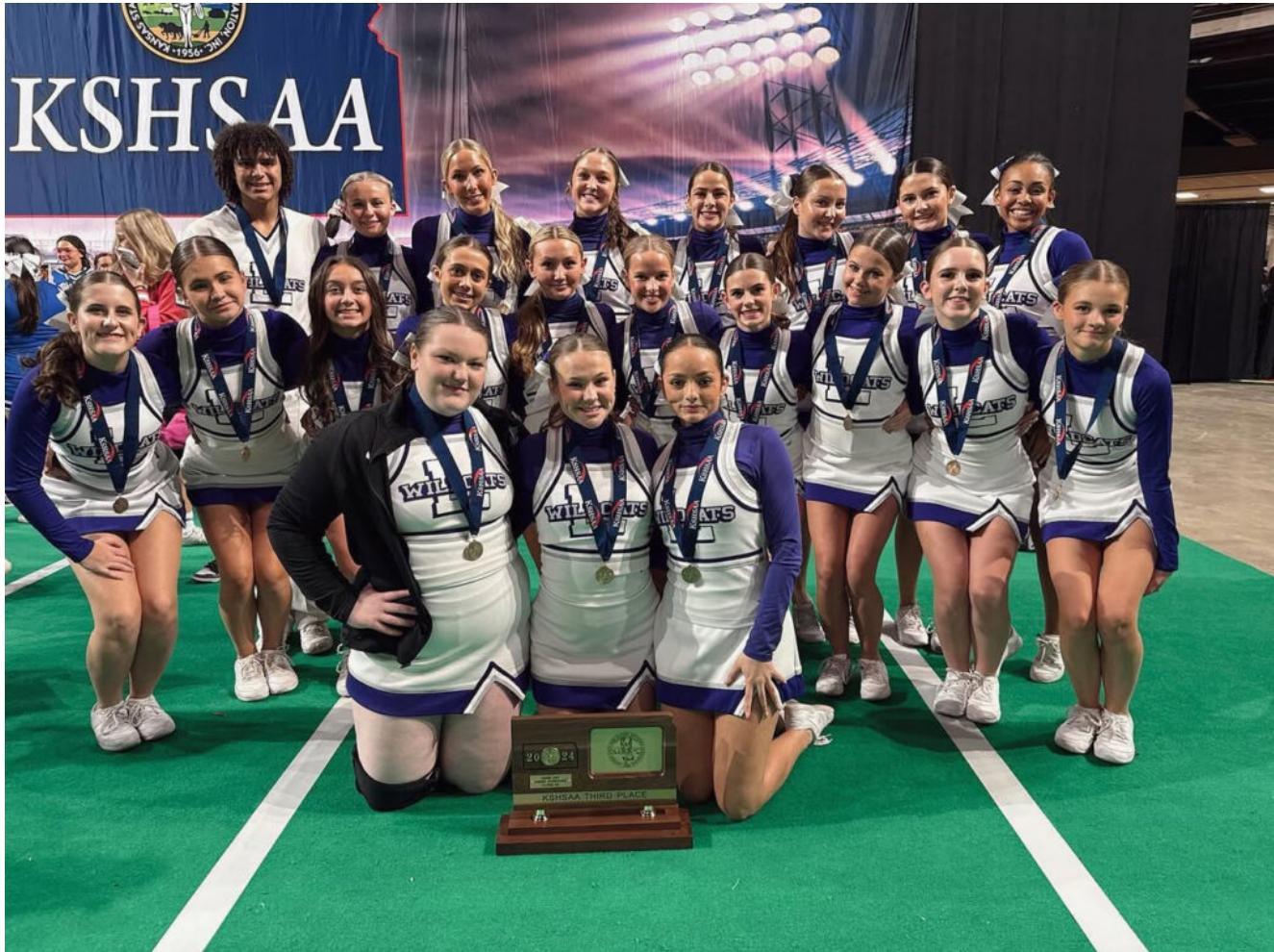
Then, the unthinkable happened.

Dixon suffered a season-ending elbow injury that put a premature end to her collegiate career. It was a devastating blow.

However, instead of sulking, Dixon worked that much harder to get back to the court and achieve her ultimate goal – playing professional volleyball.

All that hard work finally came to fruition back in July when Dixon, a 2019 Louisburg High School graduate, signed with the Atlanta Vibe, which is a part of the Pro Volleyball Federation.

“I am super excited to compete at the highest level, but also to be able to do that here in the US,” Dixon said. “It has been a dream of mine to be able to play professionally, in front of club girls who are in the same shoes that I was in many years ago. I am excited to give them the opportunity to have something to look forward to and work toward. Blessed for the opportunity and ready to get to work.”



Members of the Louisburg cheer team are: (Front row) Anna Brizendine, Addison Vargo, Reece Jones; (middle row) Leia Ward, Lilly Burnett, Taryn Osborn, Elle Keating, Brooklyn Roney, Harper Boyle, Kelsey Shelton, Kim Powls, Gretchen Reitz, Kinsley Rayne; (back row) Will Leach, Kayleigh Ramsey (Laney Stohs, Reece Younggren, Reese Anderson, Greta Gatzka, Addison Bishop, Maggie Wanjigi

7. Cheer takes third at state

TOPEKA – The Louisburg High School cheerleading squad is no stranger to the finals of the Class 4A Game Day competition.

Heading into the Nov. 23 showcase in Topeka, the Wildcats have made the final round in each of the last five seasons. Louisburg had no problem making it a sixth straight, and for the fifth time in six years, they came home with a state plaque.

Louisburg finished third in the state competition as it edged out Baldwin for the top three spot in Class 4A.

"Bringing home another trophy from the Game Day Cheer competition was a testament to our team's hard work, dedication, and growth throughout the season," Louisburg cheer coach Breanna Kostroske said. "It means so much to us because it reflects their skill, their heart, and spirit—three things we emphasize daily. For our athletes, it symbolizes their resilience and the countless hours they've spent perfecting their routines.

"As coaches, we are incredibly proud of their overall performance. They left it all on the floor, and while there is always room for improvement, they gave a performance that showcased their teamwork, precision, and energy."



Louisburg junior Ashton Moore took fourth overall at 190

pounds at the Class 4A state wrestling tournament in February.

6. Moore medals at state wrestling

SALINA – Louisburg has been no stranger to the medal stand at the Class 4A state wrestling tournament and it was the case again back in February in Salina.

Louisburg junior Ashton Moore reached the semifinals at 190 pounds on the first day to secure himself a medal, and then finished fourth overall on the tournament's final day.

Moore had several close matches throughout the 3-day tournament at the Tony's Pizza Events Center and was challenged each day.

"I thought I wrestled some of my best matches of the season and it felt great to have it pay off with a medal," Moore said. "It felt amazing to win those first two matches and know I was guaranteed my medal. Those wins really helped me gain a lot of confidence going forward in the tournament."

Five other Wildcats made the trip to state, but faced some tough matchups. Juniors Canaan Clayton (113 pounds), Will Showalter (120), Logan Henry (132), Jay McCaskill (157) and senior Traden Noll (150) each finished 0-2 on the first day.



Louisburg sophomore Colin Brown earned medals in the 100 butterfly and 100 backstroke during the Class 5-1A state meet in Topeka.

5. Wildcat boys swim makes history earning 5 medals at state

TOPEKA – The Louisburg boys swim program is still relatively new compared to other teams around the state, but the Wildcats made its presence felt back in February at the Class 5-1A state meet in Topeka.

Louisburg had its best postseason finish in its young history as the Wildcats finished eighth overall in the team standings with 104 points thanks in part to just four swimmers.

Two of those athletes – Colin Brown and Andrew Jamison – each brought home individual medals. Brown, Jamison, Colton Prettyman and Noah Sharp also medaled in the 200-yard medley

relay.

Brown hit the pool strong as the Wildcat sophomore medaled fourth in the 100-yard butterfly and later finished fifth in the 100 backstroke with personal best times.

Jamison, another sophomore, earned two medals of his own. He finished fifth in the 200 individual medley and later took sixth in the 100 breaststroke.

Prettyman reached the consolation finals in the 50 freestyle and took 13th overall with a personal best time.



Louisburg senior Myles Vohs makes a leaping catch in the fourth quarter of Friday's game against Bishop Miege.

4. Wildcat football nearly pulls upset of Miege as successful season comes to early close

The mountain of playing Bishop Miege is always a tough one for public schools to climb, especially when it comes to football.

Miege, which has won seven state titles in the last 10 years, has never lost to a non-private school in the playoffs during that decade long of dominance.

Louisburg wanted to be the first team to hand it that loss as the No. 2 seed Wildcats hosted the No. 15 Stags in the first round of the Class 4A state playoffs.

The Wildcats were so close to that mountaintop, but came up just short as they fell to Miege, 21-14, to end their season with a 7-2 record.

Louisburg was behind 14 points, only to rally and tie the game at halftime. The Wildcats had one final drive to try and tie it again late, but a Miege interception dashed the Wildcats' hopes of an upset.

"In this moment, the only word I can come up right now is proud," Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. "I am so proud of the team. Our biggest emphasis was we had to start fast and we didn't. They got out to a 14-0 lead, and most times when you play teams like Miege that can snowball and get out of hand quick. Those guys just battled and were able to tie it up at halftime. Then for us to continue to fight and have a chance to tie it at the end – proud is all I can say about them."

The Wildcats ended their season with back-to-back losses after they won their first seven games of the season. They were in line to win their third straight league title, but lost a close game the week before to Spring Hill that also bumped

them off their No. 1 seed line, forcing a matchup with Miege in the first round.

Miege's streak of state titles came to an end later in the season as the Stags fell to Andover Central in the state championship game.



(Photo courtesy of Minna Meyer)

The Louisburg girls soccer team hoists the regional championship plaque following their 2-0 win against Maranatha Academy.

3. Wildcat girls soccer wins regional championship

For the last two seasons, the Louisburg girls soccer team has seen heartbreak in the Class 4-1A regional championship.

Losses to Topeka-Hayden and Bishop Miege have prevented the Wildcats from that regional title, with their last coming in

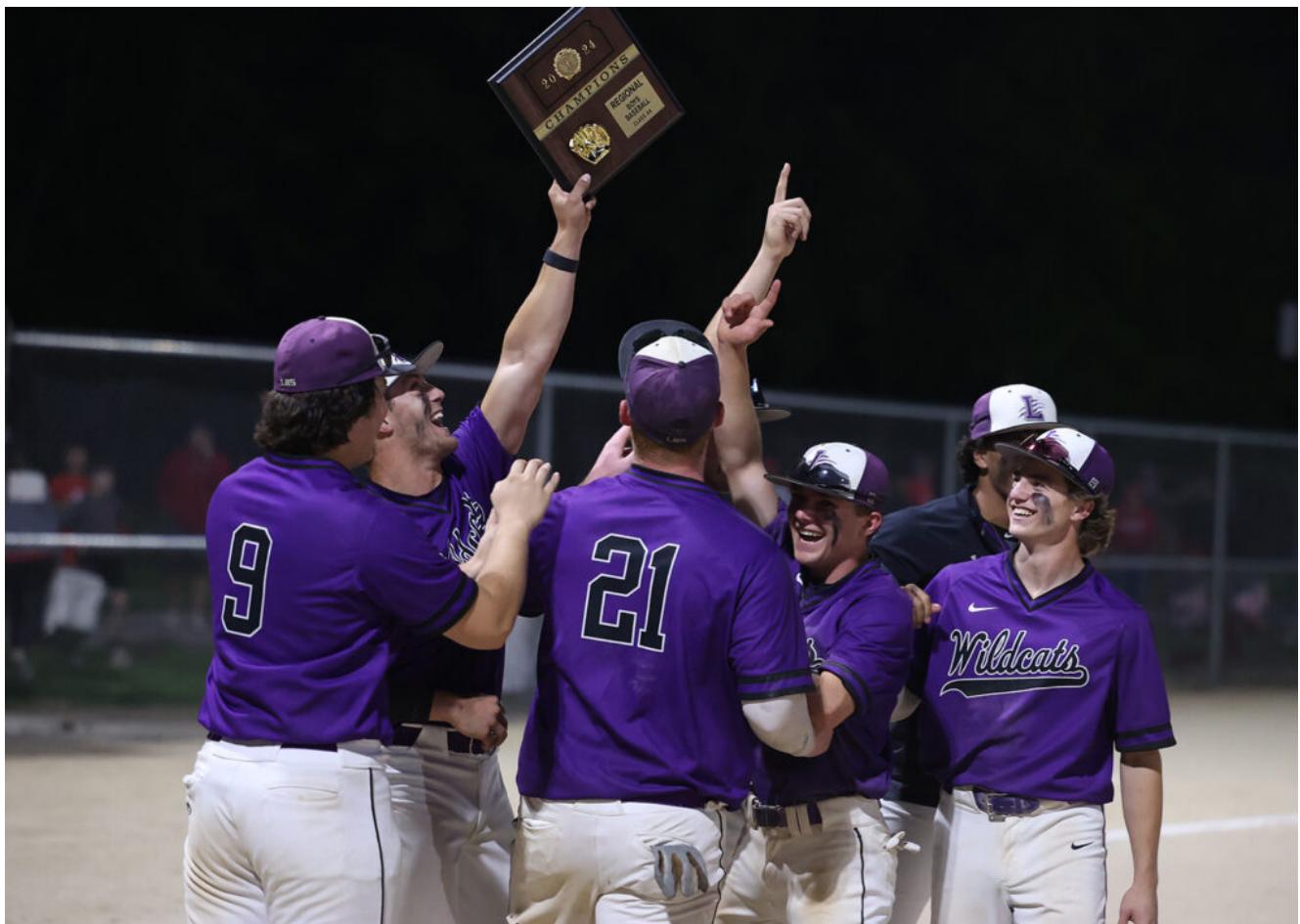
2021.

It is elusive no more.

The No. 1 seed Wildcats shutout No. 8 Maranatha Academy, 2-0, to win the Class 4-1A regional title at Wildcat Stadium. It was a dominating effort from start to finish as the Wildcats improved their record to 13-4-1 on the season.

“This was a preseason goal of ours,” Louisburg coach Ben York said. “We fell short last year and we wanted to do as much as we could in the regular season to control our own destiny. The girls put a lot of work in and were focused to get to this game and get a win. They definitely earned this one and it was good to see them enjoy it.”

Louisburg faced a tough matchup in the state quarterfinals as the Wildcats lost to Bishop Miege at home, 7-0.



Louisburg senior Declan Battle hoists the regional championship trophy following the Wildcats' 10-3 win over

Wamego in Class 4A regional championship game.

2. Wildcat baseball earns first regional title in 15 years

The current members of the Louisburg baseball team couldn't remember the last time the Wildcats made the state tournament even if they tried.

That's because they were just wee toddlers the last time the Wildcats earned a spot a state – 2009 to be exact.

These players are going to have a hard time forgetting this one.

For the first time in 15 years, Louisburg is headed back to the state tournament after the Wildcats put together a convincing 10-3 victory over Wamego in the Class 4A regional championship back in May at Lewis-Young Park.

The Wildcats also defeated Parsons, 8-0, in the regional semifinal to put together what was a dominating performance from top to bottom.

"This is just amazing," Louisburg coach Kade Larson said. "To see how much work these guys have put in, then to come out and get the job done, it is pretty surreal. We had a bunch of guys step up and do exactly what they needed to do. They played great defense, pitched great and everyone in the dug out was into the game. It was a great win."

"It has been awhile and it has been a long time coming. We have had some great teams and this team finally pushed through and got it done."

In the state tournament, the Wildcats had to battle rival Paola in the first round, but lost in a pitcher's dual to the Panthers, 3-0.



Louisburg senior Maddy Carpenter-Ross celebrates after clearing 12 feet at the Class 4A state meet in Wichita. That clearance gave Carpenter-Ross her second straight state championship in the event.

1. Wildcat sweep pole vault state titles, medal 8 at state

WICHITA – Cooper Wingfield and Maddy Carpenter-Ross found their way atop the medal stand last May at the Class 4A state track meet.

All season, Carpenter-Ross had her eyes set on a second straight state title in the pole vault and she dominated her competition.

Going into the Class 4A state meet at Wichita State, Carpenter-Ross won every competition going away and was ready to do the same against some of the state's best.

This time, however, it was much harder.

To get this state title, Carpenter-Ross was going to have to have to set a new personal best and break her own school record in the process.

She did it and accomplished that feat on her first try.

With two competitors left at 12 feet, Carpenter-Ross cleared it on her first try as did Holton's Piper Robinson. Both competitors missed at 12-6, and since they were tied, they decided the winner based on misses at 11-6, where the Louisburg senior got it on her first try.

"It is pretty awesome," Carpenter-Ross said. "I worked really hard for that and I am so relieved right now. It was a little stressful, but I was in that competitive mindset and I was so happy that I PR'd. Everyone was setting personal records, so I was just like 'My turn.'"



Louisburg junior Cooper Wingfield pumps his fist after

clearing 15 feet in the pole vault at the Class 4A state meet in Wichita. He captured his first state title in the event.

Wingfield, who was the state runner-up last season, entered the competition at 14 feet. He missed the first two attempts on his opening height, and another miss would not only prevent him from a state title, but a spot on the medal stand.

On the third attempt, the Louisburg junior cleared it with ease and eventually cleared 15 feet on his first attempt, which was the winning height.

"I was really nervous there on that last attempt (at 14 feet)," Wingfield said. "All I needed was a good jump to get in the zone and from there I knew I could jump pretty high. The competition was a lot harder this time around than it was last year. I knew I had to make everything on my first attempt and once I had one good jump, I knew I could do it."

It had already been a special season in the pole vault for Wingfield, as he earned a league and regional title, and broke the school record.

Other state medalists were Gavin Lohse (third, long jump), Jaymes Melton (seventh, shot put), Ben O'Bryan (seventh, discus), Suzanna Dansel (seventh 100 dash) and Jacob Brown (eighth, pole vault). The girls 4x100 team of Dansel, Kendall Crossley, Emma Vohs and Addi Mallett medaled sixth.

McCaskill leads Wildcats in challenging Tonganoxie

tourney



Louisburg senior Jay McCaskill won the 165-pound weight class at the Randy Starcher Invitational at Tonganoxie High School.

TONGANOXIE – The Louisburg boys wrestling team faced its toughest competition to date as the Wildcats traveled to the Randy Starcher Invitational on Dec. 21 in Tonganoxie.

The tournament featured a pair of state-ranked teams in Tonganoxie and St. Thomas Aquinas, along with traditionally good teams in Frontenac, Lansing and Savannah (Mo.). With all that came several state-ranked wrestlers, and the Wildcats were more than tested.

Louisburg battled its way through its final tournament of 2024 as the Wildcats sent six wrestlers to the podium as each of them had a top four finish, including senior Jay McCaskill, who won the 165-pound title.

In all, the Wildcats finished sixth in the team standings out of 10 teams with 130 points. Tonganoxie won the tournament title with 202 points, as it edged out runner-up Savannah by one.

"Tonganoxie definitely upped the ante with how tough their tournament is," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "The guys definitely stepped up to the challenge. That's our motto this year – *Carpe Diem*, or 'seize the day.' We've been talking about it in the sense that our goal is to be able to rise up to any challenge or obstacle in our way. Tournaments like what Tongie puts on is a great measuring stick to help us learn and refocus."



Louisburg senior Canaan Clayton puts an opponent on his back on Dec. 21 in Tonganoxie.

McCaskill led the charge for Louisburg as he rolled through the 165-pound bracket with ease. He finished the day with a 5-0 record and improved his season record to 11-0.

The Louisburg senior also never had to work outside the first period as all five of his victories were by pin in under two minutes. That included a pin of Savannah's Kaiden Phillips in the championship match in just 1 minute and 3 seconds.

"Jay is in an incredible groove right now," Bovaird said. "He started off fighting an illness that kept him off the mats the first week, but since the December Duals, he's been a pinning machine. At Tonganoxie, he had his sights on getting the gold medal, and he did it in a dominant fashion."

The five other Wildcats who reached the podium each finished fourth overall. Seniors Canaan Clayton (120 pounds), Mika McKittrick (132), sophomore Bryce Thompson (157), along with seniors Brayden Yoder (190) and Miles Meek (285) all earned a medal.

McKittrick was 3-2 on the day with a pair of pins, while Clayton, Thompson and Yoder each recorded a pair of wins and Meek was 1-3.



Louisburg senior Miles Meek gets some back points during the team's tournament in Tonganoxie. Meek finished fourth at 285 pounds.

Wildcat senior Ashton Moore had a tough weight class at 215 pounds that featured two state-ranked wrestlers and he took fifth overall.

Moore, who is currently ranked No. 3 in Class 4A, lost to Savannah's Cooper Burnsides, who was a state runner-up last season and Junction City's Chris Coy, who was a state placer at Class 6A. On the day, Moore finished with a 4-2 record.

Junior Vance Hahn also took fifth at 175 pounds as he won his final three matches on the day, all by pin.

So far, Bovaird has liked what he has seen from his group as the 2024 season has come to a close.

"It was great seeing the team step up and scrap with some outstanding competition," Bovaird said. "We spend a lot of

time talking about mindset, and before the tournament, the topic was being disciplined and competing with purpose. The first part of our competition season is mostly duals, so it was nice to go into the break with the guys having a chance to bring home some medals."

Wildcats get road dual win over Olathe West

Louisburg hit the road on Dec. 19 as the Wildcats traveled to Olathe West for its final dual before the holiday break and won 43-34.

Louisburg's Myke McKittrick recorded a big pin for the Wildcats at 126 pounds, while Brayden Yoder won by decision over a state qualifier at 190 pounds in two pivotal matches.

"The Olathe West dual is always a tough, but friendly competition," coach Bovaird said. "I like their program and how their coach runs things, and we can always count on it being a battle.

Levi Cotter (106), Logan Henry (138), Bryce Thompson (157), Vance Hahn (175) and Ashton Moore (215) also earned wins for the Wildcats.

Collins, DeWeese medal to lead Wildcat girls at

Atchison County



Louisburg's Maliya Collins (left) and Brooklyn DeWeese earned medals on Dec. 21 at the ACCHS Invitational in Effingham.

EFFINGHAM – The Louisburg girls wrestling team ventured into tournament action on Dec. 21 in Effingham and a couple of the Wildcat wrestlers left with some hardware.

Louisburg's Maliya Collins and Brooklyn DeWeese came away with medals and a top three finish in their respective weight classes at the ACCHS Invitational. As a team, the Wildcats also wrestled strong as they finished sixth out of 18 teams with 50.5 points.

"Overall the girls had a great performance," Louisburg coach Heather Eslinger said. "For many of our freshmen, this tournament helped boost confidence as they proved to themselves that they can perform at the varsity level. For our

newer wrestlers who may not be at the varsity level yet, this tournament gave them just that more experience and time on the mat to learn. Each and every girl battled though wins and losses, never giving up.”

Collins had a big day in the 140-pound bracket. The Louisburg sophomore advanced to the championship match with a pair of wins.

She opened with a 33 second pin of Washburn Rural’s Ayla Ross and then won by technical fall over Sabetha’s Naomi Pearson in the semifinals. Collins then faced Jefferson West’s Taryn Taylor and was pinned in 53 seconds to finish second overall.

DeWeese also had a strong performance at 120 pounds as she went 3-1 on the day and took third overall.

She opened with a pin of Washburn Rural’s Makenzie Cowhick, but lost a tough 14-9 decision in the semifinals to Jayhawk-Linn’s Alayna McCarty. DeWeese would bounce back with a pin in the consolation semifinals and then pinned Rock Creek’s Claire Steeves in the third place match.

“I was thrilled that Maliya and Brooklyn medaled,” Eslinger said. “Both girls are extremely competitive and are their own worst critics. They are much harder on themselves than I am. I think that medaling helps them to understand that wrestling isn’t about each match, but about growth over time, and how we learn, improve and perform over the span of the entire season.”

Emma Duckworth nearly became the Wildcats’ third medalist on the day, but fell just short at 125 pounds as she finished fourth.

Duckworth opened with a pin in her first match, but fell by pin to Washburn Rural’s Gabby Collins in the semis. Duckworth responded with a pin in the consolation semifinals, but lost to Rock Creek’s Ali Wilcoxson in the third place match.

Evelyn Rue (130), Alina Wojciechowski (135), Leola Eslinger (145) and Nora Smith (170) also competed for the Wildcats.

It has been a good start to the season for the Wildcats as they have had three competitions to start the year.

"I think the girls are going into the break on a positive note," coach Eslinger said. "This is a well-earned and needed break. Most of the team is bruised and battered, as all the wrestlers are, but being young they are learning that this physical feeling is part of wrestling. Break will give them some rest and recovery time to prepare for the next seven weeks."

Week 3 Athlete of the Week: Jay McCaskill



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

JAY MCCASKILL, SENIOR, WRESTLING

Louisburg senior Jay McCaskill is off to a good start to his wrestling season. McCaskill was perfect in 2024 and that included a first place finish last Saturday. McCaskill won the 165-pound title at the Randy Starcher Invitational at Tonganoxie High School as he recorded a 5-0 record and all wins were by pin. All of those pins came in the first period.

On Dec. 20, McCaskill also earned a victory by pin in the Wildcats' dual win over Olathe West. On the season, McCaskill has posted an 11-0 record, which includes a December Duals victory earlier this month and a spot on the All-Tournament Team.

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday morning during the winter season and the winner is selected by

Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.

Previous winners:

Week 1: Gavin Lohse

Week 2: Colin Brown

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