

Week 5 Athlete of the Week: Trace Eslinger



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

TRACE ESLINGER, SENIOR, WRESTLING

Louisburg senior Trace Eslinger won his first tournament title of the season last Saturday at the Topeka High Invitational. Eslinger won the 215-pound championship with a 7-2 decision over Council Grove's Tyler Hutchinson, despite weighing 25 pounds under the 215-pound limit. He also recorded a pin in the semifinals.

Even though he is giving up several pounds to his opponents, Eslinger is currently 15-5 on the season after Saturday's win at Topeka High as he helped the Wildcats to their second straight team championship.

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: Adyson Ross

Week 2: Colin Brown

Week 3: Colyer Wingfield

Week 4: Kaven Bartlett



The collage features the Ironhorse Family & Cosmetic Dentistry logo (a purple horse head) and a QR code. It also includes Dr. Laura's Orthodontics logo (a yellow sunburst) and a photo of a smiling child. Text on the right side reads: "Comfortable dental care for the entire family", "No shots, no drills, no pain", "We offer sedation dentistry", and "Orthodontics, TMJ and Sleep Apnea Treatment". At the bottom, two addresses are listed: "5321 W. 151st Street, Leawood, KS 66224 (913) 851-9969" and "1270 W. Amity, Louisburg, KS 66053 (913) 837-3096".

Wildcats win second straight tourney title to begin new year



The Louisburg High School wrestling team won the Topeka High Invitational on Saturday as the Wildcats edged Council Grove for the title.

TOPEKA – Since coming back from the holiday break, all the Louisburg wrestling team has done is win.

The Wildcats continued that Saturday as they competed at the Topeka Invitational. Louisburg captured its second straight tournament victory as the Wildcats scored 156 points and edged out Council Grove by three points to leave with some hardware.

Louisburg also did it short-handed as one of their wrestlers was out with an illness and the Wildcats weren't able to field a full roster.

"It felt great to win the team title, especially considering the fact that we were without a big point scorer at 157," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Jay McCaskill was sick and unable to compete. I think there were a few matches that were pretty winnable that we needed to go our way, but ultimately, they were great learning opportunities."

The Wildcats also left Topeka with a pair of champions. Seniors Kaven Bartlett (138 pounds) and Trace Eslinger (215) won their respective weight classes and were two of seven Wildcats to earn top 3 finishes.

Bartlett won the 138-pound crown with a pin of Topeka West's Maxwell Cook in the semifinals and then earned a first period pin of Council Grove's Caden Honer in the finals. Bartlett improved his record to 21-0 on the season is currently ranked No. 3 in Class 4A.

Eslinger captured his first tournament title of the season at 215 pounds. The Louisburg senior pinned KC Washington's JohVonte Ross in the third period of his semifinal match and then earned a 7-2 decision over Council Grove's Tyler Hutchinson in the finals.

"Trace is regularly weighing in at 190 or 188, and he's giving up a lot of weight in his matches at 215," Bovaird said. "He's been a warrior this season, never complaining and always giving his best efforts. Definitely very proud of how he wrestled Saturday."

Sophomores Will Showalter (106 pounds), Mika McKitrick (132), Brayden Yoder (190) and junior Elias Pugh (175) also earned a spot in the championship match and all four finished with runner-up honors.

Yoder faced a ranked-opponent in his championship match. He squared off with Council Grove's Ace Monihen, who is currently ranked No. 2 in the state in Class 3-2-1A. Yoder battled, but came up just short in a 4-0 decision to take second.

Senior Jesse Murphy (144), junior J'Lee Collins (126) and senior Elijah Eslinger (285) each finished third, while freshman Keegan Rogers (120) took fourth.

"That was one of the reasons why we'd kept this tournament on our schedule the last few years," Bovaird said. "It gives our younger guys a chance to boost confidence, and the month of January is a grind for wrestlers. The next two tournaments are tough ones, and then we start our championship series of League, Regionals, and State.

"Will Showalter was so close to winning his first championship at 106, losing in the final seconds on a takedown and nearfall. He wrestled great all weekend. Mika McKitrick and Elias Pugh both made the finals for the first time of their career. Both of them wrestled with confidence and focus. Elijah Eslinger, Jesse Murphy, and J'Lee Collins all bounced back from disappointing losses to finish third in their weights. I thought they showed great leadership by being resilient and refocusing. Brayden wrestled a very tough match in the finals to a Council Grove wrestler who's ranked No. 2 in 321A and No. 7 in all classes."

The schedule starts to heat up for the Wildcats this week and it all starts today as they host Labette County and Olathe South for a double dual. Action begins at 6 p.m. at Louisburg High School.

Louisburg will then follow it up with another dual Wednesday

at Lawrence High School, before competing at the two-day tournament Friday and Saturday at Blue Valley Northwest.

“This is the kind of test we need, and it’s great to help break up the monotony of January,” Bovaird said. “We have three duals and a big tournament. Should be lots of great matches for our guys. The first two weeks of January gave us some great encouragement and motivation, and now it’s time to put it to the test against some of the best wrestlers in the area.”

106

Will Showalter (9-12) placed 2nd and scored 18.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Will Showalter (Louisburg Boys) 9-12 won by fall over Aidan Oldham (Gardner-Edgerton Boys) 5-11 (Fall 3:24)
- Semifinal – Will Showalter (Louisburg Boys) 9-12 won by fall over Maverick Hug (Holton) 15-9 (Fall 1:00)
- 1st Place Match – Scotty Leandro (Burlingame) 14-6 won by decision over Will Showalter (Louisburg Boys) 9-12 (Dec 12-10)

113

Broden Vargo (1-9) place is unknown and scored 0.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Cesar Sandoval (Holton) 11-9 won by fall over Broden Vargo (Louisburg Boys) 1-9 (Fall 2:45)
- Cons. Round 1 – Broden Vargo (Louisburg Boys) 1-9 received a bye () (Bye)
- Cons. Semi – Elijah Phelps (Topeka West Boys) 3-6 won by fall over Broden Vargo (Louisburg Boys) 1-9 (Fall 5:52)

120

Keegan Rogers (5-14) placed 4th and scored 11.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Keegan Rogers (Louisburg Boys) 5-14 won by fall over Gavyn Chovanec (Gardner-Edgerton Boys) 2-10 (Fall 1:48)
- Semifinal – Lucas Baetz (Holton) 16-5 won by fall over Keegan Rogers (Louisburg Boys) 5-14 (Fall 0:34)
- Cons. Semi – Keegan Rogers (Louisburg Boys) 5-14 won by fall over Seth Quaney (Burlingame) 3-14 (Fall 4:40)
- 3rd Place Match – Tyree English (Topeka High Boys) 11-8 won by fall over Keegan Rogers (Louisburg Boys) 5-14 (Fall 2:26)

126

J`Lee Collins (11-8) placed 3rd and scored 11.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Sean Morrissey (Holton) 5-5 won by decision over J`Lee Collins (Louisburg Boys) 11-8 (Dec 7-6)
- Cons. Round 1 – J`Lee Collins (Louisburg Boys) 11-8 received a bye () (Bye)
- Cons. Semi – J`Lee Collins (Louisburg Boys) 11-8 won by fall over Ethan Lif (Council Grove Boys) 8-6 (Fall 1:16)
- 3rd Place Match – J`Lee Collins (Louisburg Boys) 11-8 won by decision over Sean Morrissey (Holton) 5-5 (Dec 15-10)

132

Mika McKitrick (6-12) placed 2nd and scored 18.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Mika McKitrick (Louisburg Boys) 6-12 won by fall over Jordan Stiner (Topeka High Boys) 8-9 (Fall 2:23)
- Semifinal – Mika McKitrick (Louisburg Boys) 6-12 won by fall over Caleb Sullivan (Gardner-Edgerton Boys) 12-12 (Fall 3:16)
- 1st Place Match – Michael Weatherly (Topeka West Boys) 17-9 won by fall over Mika McKitrick (Louisburg Boys) 6-12 (Fall 0:41)

138

Kaven Bartlett (21-0) placed 1st and scored 22.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg Boys) 21-0 received a bye () (Bye)
- Semifinal – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg Boys) 21-0 won by fall over Maxwell Cook (Topeka West Boys) 5-7 (Fall 1:22)
- 1st Place Match – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg Boys) 21-0 won by fall over Caden Honer (Council Grove Boys) 7-3 (Fall 1:28)

144

Jesse Murphy (16-7) placed 3rd and scored 12.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg Boys) 16-7 received a bye () (Bye)
- Semifinal – Hadley Smith (Council Grove Boys) 17-6 won by fall over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg Boys) 16-7 (Fall 3:27)
- Cons. Semi – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg Boys) 16-7 won by fall over Calvin Noonan (Burlingame) 5-7 (Fall 1:25)
- 3rd Place Match – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg Boys) 16-7 won

by fall over Ethan Harralson (Gardner-Edgerton Boys)
9-11 (Fall 3:40)

150

Colin Robinson (1-11) place is unknown and scored 0.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Jace Goodman (Council Grove Boys) 18-3 won by fall over Colin Robinson (Louisburg Boys) 1-11 (Fall 1:09)
- Cons. Round 1 – Michael Cooper (Topeka West Boys) 6-20 won by fall over Colin Robinson (Louisburg Boys) 1-11 (Fall 4:33)

165

Vance Hahn (2-19) place is unknown and scored 0.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Joseph Cisneros (Gardner-Edgerton Boys) 5-2 won by fall over Vance Hahn (Louisburg Boys) 2-19 (Fall 2:54)
- Cons. Round 1 – Jacob Drone (Bishop Miege Boys) 9-12 won by fall over Vance Hahn (Louisburg Boys) 2-19 (Fall 2:41)

175

Elias Pugh (3-4) placed 2nd and scored 16.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Elias Pugh (Louisburg Boys) 3-4 received a bye () (Bye)
- Semifinal – Elias Pugh (Louisburg Boys) 3-4 won by fall over Kaleb Moore (Gardner-Edgerton Boys) 3-1 (Fall 1:02)

- 1st Place Match – Cole Wilson (Council Grove Boys) 9-11 won by fall over Elias Pugh (Louisburg Boys) 3-4 (Fall 2:56)

190

Brayden Yoder (16-6) placed 2nd and scored 16.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg Boys) 16-6 received a bye () (Bye)
- Semifinal – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg Boys) 16-6 won by fall over Korden Kinney (Burlingame) 8-11 (Fall 0:48)
- 1st Place Match – Ace Monihen (Council Grove Boys) 21-0 won by decision over Brayden Yoder (Louisburg Boys) 16-6 (Dec 4-0)

215

Trace Eslinger (15-5) placed 1st and scored 20.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg Boys) 15-5 received a bye () (Bye)
- Semifinal – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg Boys) 15-5 won by fall over JohVonte Ross (KC Washington Boys) 7-8 (Fall 4:54)
- 1st Place Match – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg Boys) 15-5 won by decision over Tyler Hutchinson (Council Grove Boys) 15-8 (Dec 7-2)

285

Elijah Eslinger (20-3) placed 3rd and scored 12.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg Boys) 20-3

received a bye () (Bye)

- Semifinal – Holden Ziegler (Council Grove Boys) 16-2 won by fall over Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg Boys) 20-3 (Fall 1:12)
- Cons. Semi – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg Boys) 20-3 won by fall over Bennett Vann (Gardner-Edgerton Boys) 4-2 (Fall 1:33)
- 3rd Place Match – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg Boys) 20-3 won by fall over Cooper Martin (Topeka High Boys) 17-13 (Fall 2:30)

Louisburg wrestling wins home invitational for first time since 1998



The Louisburg wrestling team captured the Wildcat Classic team title Saturday, its first home tournament championship in nearly 25 years.

It had been a long time coming.

Louisburg had waited years for the opportunity to say that it won its home invitational – the Wildcat Classic. The time came Saturday as the Wildcats captured the title with 183 points and outlasted runner-up Shawnee Mission East, which had 160.

To put in perspective how long it had been since the Wildcats last won their home tournament, none of the current Louisburg wrestlers had been born yet and assistant coach Shawn Crossley was a senior in high school.

Louisburg last won the team crown in 1998 and it was a nice moment for a team that already had plenty to celebrate with individual titles and career milestones.

“This tournament has a lot of history over the years, and I thought it was pretty awesome for the guys to be able to go out and win it as a team,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Back in the 1970-71 season, then head coach and athletic director Don Meek started up the tournament, and we won the inaugural Wildcat Classic. Before this year’s tournament started, we had a nice pep talk in the practice room, and Coach Crossley talked about how awesome it felt to have the team win this tournament when he was a senior in 1998.

“Looking through the records I have, that 1998 tournament was the last time we’d won our home tournament. We had some hiccups throughout the day, but in the end, the guys finished strong and everyone contributed to the team effort.”



Senior Kaven Bartlett won the Wildcat Classic tournament championship at 138 pounds Saturday with a 4-0 record and three pins.

The Wildcats also experienced a lot of individual success as senior Kaven Bartlett and sophomore Brayden Yoder won individual titles in their respective weight classes.

Bartlett had a 4-0 record on the day that included three pints. He faced off with Anderson County's A.J. Shaffer in the championship at 138 pounds and left with a 7-2 decision.

In his semifinal match, Bartlett earned career win No. 100 with a pin of Shawnee Mission East's Grey Robinson.



Kaven Bartlett's teammates present him with a plaque following his 100th career win Saturday.

"The last time Kaven wrestled that Anderson County kid, he'd given Kaven a scare, but this time, it was definitely Kaven's match," Bovaird said. "He was calm and collected in his scrambles, he was direct with his attacks, and he was smart throughout the whole match. He made a statement with that match, and I'm looking forward to seeing what he's able to do with each successive tournament we go to this year."

Yoder picked up his first tournament win of the season. At 190 pounds, the Wildcat sophomore breezed through his bracket with four pins and a 13-2 major decision of Royal Valley's Cyrus Harding to improve his record to 15-5 on the season.



Sophomore Brayden Yoder works for one of his four pins during Saturday's Wildcat Classic. Yoder won the 190-pound title with a 5-0 record.

"One thing I said to Brayden after one of his matches was that this year, he's been methodical, diverse, and dynamic in his matches," Bovaird said. "He's doing things right, he's moving his feet and keeping pressure on top, and he's hitting a variety of techniques. With those things, I'm hoping to see more confidence from him, and this weekend, he totally stepped up his game. To win his first varsity tournament as a sophomore, I'm pretty proud of how he's been wrestling."

The Wildcats also had four wrestlers finish with third place honors. Junior J'Lee Collins (126 pounds), senior Jesse Murphy (144), senior Trace Eslinger (215) and Elijah Eslinger (285) found a way to the medal stand.

Sophomore Jay McCaskill also earned a spot on the podium as he was fourth at 157 pounds.



Louisburg senior Jesse Murphy gets a pin Saturday during the Wildcat Classic. Murphy took third place at 144 pounds.

A number of Wildcats also earned their first varsity victories of the season in Kaleb Carter (144), Colin Robinson (150), Vance Hahn (165), Elias Pugh (175) and Grant Strubbe (285).

“There were a lot of great things this past weekend,” Bovaird said. “Everyone contributed team points that helped us win the team title. We had a full line-up, which was great because we were the only team to be able to do that. The timing of our tournament is rough because it’s right after the holiday break, and kids are always struggling with illnesses, injuries, and weight at this point. We had a bunch of guys wrestle unattached, too, and that was beneficial for the team because most of them were able to win matches and block other teams from scoring points.”

Louisburg will try for back-to-back tournament wins this Saturday when the Wildcats travel to the Topeka High Invitational.

106

Will Showalter (7-11) placed 5th and scored 7.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Devin Vogel (Kansas City-Turner) 6-3 won by fall over Will Showalter (Louisburg) 7-11 (Fall 2:17)
- Round 2 – Denton White (Mound City-Jayhawk Linn) 14-1 won by fall over Will Showalter (Louisburg) 7-11 (Fall 0:00)
- Round 3 – Mitchell Horrigan (Leavenworth) 10-6 won by fall over Will Showalter (Louisburg) 7-11 (Fall 3:28)
- Round 4 – Peyton Rivera (Hoyt-Royal Valley) 7-4 won by fall over Will Showalter (Louisburg) 7-11 (Fall 1:22)
- Round 5 – Will Showalter (Louisburg) 7-11 won by fall over Brady Spegal (Blue Valley West) 0-10 (Fall 2:36)

113

Broden Vargo (1-7) placed 5th and scored 5.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Broden Vargo (Louisburg) 1-7 received a bye () (Bye)
- Round 2 – Makao Groneman (Kansas City-Piper) 5-9 won by fall over Broden Vargo (Louisburg) 1-7 (Fall 1:19)
- Round 3 – Scott Fohlmeister (Blue Valley West) 10-7 won by fall over Broden Vargo (Louisburg) 1-7 (Fall 0:33)
- Round 4 – Jacob Garner (Leavenworth) 6-7 won by fall over Broden Vargo (Louisburg) 1-7 (Fall 1:23)
- Round 5 – Alex Lowe (Mound City-Jayhawk Linn) 2-4 won by fall over Broden Vargo (Louisburg) 1-7 (Fall 0:24)

120

Keegan Rogers (3-12) placed 9th and scored 1.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Zach Schaffer (Anderson County) 5-0 won by fall over Keegan Rogers (Louisburg) 3-12 (Fall 0:57)
- Round 3 – Dylan Abeta (Leavenworth) 3-5 won by fall over Keegan Rogers (Louisburg) 3-12 (Fall 2:28)
- Round 4 – Payton Mills (Kansas City-Piper) 12-7 won by fall over Keegan Rogers (Louisburg) 3-12 (Fall 0:38)
- Round 5 – Colby Cross (Kansas City-Turner) 3-6 won by fall over Keegan Rogers (Louisburg) 3-12 (Fall 0:45)
- 9th Place Match – Keegan Rogers (Louisburg) 3-12 received a bye () (Bye)

126

J`Lee Collins (11-7) placed 3rd and scored 20.0 team points.

- Round 1 – J`Lee Collins (Louisburg) 11-7 won by fall over JaVon Simmons (Kansas City-Piper) 5-13 (Fall 1:09)
- Round 2 – J`Lee Collins (Louisburg) 11-7 won by fall over Baylor Ritter (Shawnee Mission East) 0-5 (Fall 0:28)
- Round 3 – J`Lee Collins (Louisburg) 11-7 won by fall over Maximo Carrassquilla (Blue Valley West) 11-13 (Fall 5:48)
- Championship Bracket – Finan Marien-McManus (Shawnee Mission East) 6-9 won by decision over J`Lee Collins (Louisburg) 11-7 (Dec 8-6)
- 3rd Place Match – J`Lee Collins (Louisburg) 11-7 won by fall over Maximo Carrassquilla (Blue Valley West) 11-13 (Fall 4:11)

132

Mika McKitrick (4-11) placed 6th.

- Round 1 – Ethan Jenkinson (Shawnee Mission East) 20-2

won by fall over Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) 4-11 (Fall 1:03)

- Round 2 – Nick Hoover (Kansas City-Piper) 11-8 won by fall over Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) 4-11 (Fall 0:24)
- Round 3 – Xander Finn (Leavenworth) 12-8 won by fall over Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) 4-11 (Fall 1:08)
- Consolation Bracket – Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) 4-11 won by fall over Logan Henry (Louisburg) 6-6 (Fall 0:00)
- 5th Place Match – Xander Finn (Leavenworth) 12-8 won by tech fall over Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) 4-11 (TF-1.5 1:43 (17-0))

132

Logan Henry (6-6) placed 7th and scored 6.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Bowen Wade (Mound City-Jayhawk Linn) 11-5 won by fall over Logan Henry (Louisburg) 6-6 (Fall 2:47)
- Round 2 – Logan Meinheit (Blue Valley West) 22-3 won by fall over Logan Henry (Louisburg) 6-6 (Fall 0:28)
- Round 3 – Logan Henry (Louisburg) 6-6 won by fall over Darren Bausch (Hoyt-Royal Valley) 0-5 (Fall 0:53)
- Consolation Bracket – Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) 4-11 won by fall over Logan Henry (Louisburg) 6-6 (Fall 0:00)
- 7th Place Match – Logan Henry (Louisburg) 6-6 won by fall over Darren Bausch (Hoyt-Royal Valley) 0-5 (Fall 0:44)

138

Kaven Bartlett (19-0) placed 1st and scored 27.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 19-0 won by fall

over Quinn Breuckmann (Blue Valley West) 7-15 (Fall 1:49)

- Round 2 – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 19-0 won by fall over Ray Phillips (Leavenworth) 3-10 (Fall 1:55)
- Round 3 – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 19-0 received a bye () (Bye)
- Championship Bracket – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 19-0 won by fall over Grey Robinson (Shawnee Mission East) 11-8 (Fall 0:49)
- 1st Place Match – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 19-0 won by decision over Aj Schaffer (Anderson County) 4-1 (Dec 7-2)

144

Kaleb Carter (1-4) placed 8th.

- Round 1 – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 14-6 won by fall over Kaleb Carter (Louisburg) 1-4 (Fall 3:50)
- Round 3 – Kaleb Carter (Louisburg) 1-4 won by fall over Armando Gomez (Shawnee Mission West) 1-4 (Fall 0:37)
- Round 4 – Xavier Davis (Leavenworth) 16-5 won by fall over Kaleb Carter (Louisburg) 1-4 (Fall 1:20)
- Round 5 – Trent Rymer (Kansas City-Piper) 6-6 won by decision over Kaleb Carter (Louisburg) 1-4 (Dec 6-0)
- 7th Place Match – Joe Musick (Shawnee Mission East) 4-14 won by fall over Kaleb Carter (Louisburg) 1-4 (Fall 4:15)

144

Jesse Murphy (14-6) placed 3rd and scored 20.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 14-6 won by fall over Kaleb Carter (Louisburg) 1-4 (Fall 3:50)

- Round 2 – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 14-6 won by fall over Armando Gomez (Shawnee Mission West) 1-4 (Fall 1:30)
- Round 3 – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 14-6 won by fall over Trent Rymer (Kansas City-Piper) 6-6 (Fall 0:47)
- Round 5 – Xavier Davis (Leavenworth) 16-5 won by fall over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 14-6 (Fall 2:52)
- 3rd Place Match – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 14-6 won by fall over Colton Wittman (Anderson County) 3-2 (Fall 2:39)

150

Colin Robinson (1-9) placed 7th and scored 3.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Masten Wright (Anderson County) 5-0 won by fall over Colin Robinson (Louisburg) 1-9 (Fall 1:05)
- Round 2 – Raymond Carrillo (Kansas City-Turner) 11-6 won by fall over Colin Robinson (Louisburg) 1-9 (Fall 1:35)
- Round 3 – Weston Ross (Hoyt-Royal Valley) 1-7 won by fall over Colin Robinson (Louisburg) 1-9 (Fall 5:07)
- Consolation Bracket – Garrett Seely (Mound City-Jayhawk Linn) 6-5 won by fall over Colin Robinson (Louisburg) 1-9 (Fall 0:41)
- 7th Place Match – Colin Robinson (Louisburg) 1-9 won by fall over Weston Ross (Hoyt-Royal Valley) 1-7 (Fall 1:36)

157

Jay McCaskill (12-6) placed 4th and scored 11.0 team points.

- Round 1 – John Wright (Anderson County) 4-0 won by fall over Jay McCaskill (Louisburg) 12-6 (Fall 5:01)
- Round 2 – Jay McCaskill (Louisburg) 12-6 received a bye

() (Bye)

- Round 3 – Jay McCaskill (Louisburg) 12-6 won by fall over Kaden Roebuck (Kansas City-Turner) 5-7 (Fall 3:31)
- Round 4 – Brady Watts (Blue Valley West) 17-6 won by decision over Jay McCaskill (Louisburg) 12-6 (Dec 10-5)
- Round 5 – Ruben Escalante (Kansas City-Piper) 11-5 won by major decision over Jay McCaskill (Louisburg) 12-6 (MD 14-4)

165

Luke York (0-3) placed 7th.

- Round 1 – Kenny Woods (Blue Valley West) 15-7 won by fall over Luke York (Louisburg) 0-3 (Fall 0:38)
- Round 2 – Quentin Enriquez (Kansas City-Piper) 8-10 won by fall over Luke York (Louisburg) 0-3 (Fall 1:06)
- Round 3 – Luke York (Louisburg) 0-3 received a bye () (Bye)
- Consolation Bracket – Aiden Owen (Anderson County) 1-4 won by fall over Luke York (Louisburg) 0-3 (Fall 0:35)
- 7th Place Match – Luke York (Louisburg) 0-3 received a bye () (Bye)

165

Vance Hahn (2-17) placed 5th and scored 9.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Christian Taylor (Girard) 9-5 won by fall over Vance Hahn (Louisburg) 2-17 (Fall 0:27)
- Round 2 – Connor Scott (Kansas City-Turner) 9-8 won by fall over Vance Hahn (Louisburg) 2-17 (Fall 1:44)
- Round 3 – Vance Hahn (Louisburg) 2-17 won by fall over Aiden Owen (Anderson County) 1-4 (Fall 2:47)
- Consolation Bracket – Vance Hahn (Louisburg) 2-17

received a bye () (Bye)

- 5th Place Match – Vance Hahn (Louisburg) 2-17 won by major decision over Aiden Owen (Anderson County) 1-4 (MD 11-2)

175

Elias Pugh (2-3) placed 5th and scored 7.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Sawyer Vas (Kansas City-Piper) 13-2 won by fall over Elias Pugh (Louisburg) 2-3 (Fall 1:05)
- Round 2 – Gunnar Noard (Shawnee Mission West) 8-9 won by fall over Elias Pugh (Louisburg) 2-3 (Fall 1:44)
- Round 3 – Porter Foltz (Anderson County) 2-3 won by fall over Elias Pugh (Louisburg) 2-3 (Fall 3:42)
- Consolation Bracket – Elias Pugh (Louisburg) 2-3 won by fall over Connor Fowles (Blue Valley West) 10-13 (Fall 4:03)
- 5th Place Match – Elias Pugh (Louisburg) 2-3 won by decision over Porter Foltz (Anderson County) 2-3 (Dec 10-9)

190

Brayden Yoder (15-5) placed 1st and scored 32.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) 15-5 won by fall over Grayson Fix (Shawnee Mission East) 3-13 (Fall 0:57)
- Round 2 – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) 15-5 won by fall over Brady Brooks (Kansas City-Piper) 5-7 (Fall 1:24)
- Round 3 – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) 15-5 won by fall over Noah Perchellet (Blue Valley West) 9-12 (Fall 2:28)
- Round 4 – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) 15-5 won by major decision over Cyrus Harding (Hoyt-Royal Valley) 7-5 (MD

13-2)

- Round 5 – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) 15-5 won by fall over Kaiden Lands (Leavenworth) 3-7 (Fall 1:32)

215

Kyle Oram (5-6) placed 4th.

- Round 1 – Kyle Oram (Louisburg) 5-6 won by fall over Ethan Ranes (Mound City-Jayhawk Linn) 1-6 (Fall 1:08)
- Round 2 – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 13-5 won by fall over Kyle Oram (Louisburg) 5-6 (Fall 1:27)
- Round 3 – Arrick Williams (Girard) 17-1 won by fall over Kyle Oram (Louisburg) 5-6 (Fall 0:51)
- Round 4 – Kyle Oram (Louisburg) 5-6 won by fall over Nicco Coccumelli (Blue Valley West) 1-4 (Fall 1:04)
- Round 5 – Jayden Schuessler (Shawnee Mission East) 15-7 won by fall over Kyle Oram (Louisburg) 5-6 (Fall 1:54)

215

Trace Eslinger (13-5) placed 3rd and scored 16.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Jayden Schuessler (Shawnee Mission East) 15-7 won by fall over Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 13-5 (Fall 3:25)
- Round 2 – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 13-5 won by fall over Kyle Oram (Louisburg) 5-6 (Fall 1:27)
- Round 3 – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 13-5 won by decision over Nicco Coccumelli (Blue Valley West) 1-4 (Dec 11-7)
- Round 4 – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 13-5 won by fall over Ethan Ranes (Mound City-Jayhawk Linn) 1-6 (Fall 1:07)
- Round 5 – Arrick Williams (Girard) 17-1 won by fall over

Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 13-5 (Fall 1:20)

285

Elijah Eslinger (18-2) placed 3rd and scored 20.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 18-2 won by fall over Zack Benso (Girard) 3-14 (Fall 0:37)
- Round 2 – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 18-2 won by fall over Brody McMannamon (Blue Valley West) 13-13 (Fall 2:57)
- Round 3 – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 18-2 won by fall over Cortez Velasco (Shawnee Mission West) 4-2 (Fall 1:32)
- Championship Bracket – Luke Clayton (Shawnee Mission East) 18-7 won by fall over Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 18-2 (Fall 3:30)
- 3rd Place Match – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 18-2 won by fall over Brody McMannamon (Blue Valley West) 13-13 (Fall 2:21)

285

Grant Strubbe (2-3) placed 6th.

- Round 1 – Luke Clayton (Shawnee Mission East) 18-7 won by fall over Grant Strubbe (Louisburg) 2-3 (Fall 4:39)
- Round 2 – Gabe Cornett (Kansas City-Turner) 16-3 won by fall over Grant Strubbe (Louisburg) 2-3 (Fall 0:24)
- Round 3 – Grant Strubbe (Louisburg) 2-3 won by fall over Isaiah Casner (Mound City-Jayhawk Linn) 3-11 (Fall 1:48)
- Consolation Bracket – Grant Strubbe (Louisburg) 2-3 won by fall over Zack Benso (Girard) 3-14 (Fall 0:30)
- 5th Place Match – Cortez Velasco (Shawnee Mission West)

4-2 won by fall over Grant Strubbe (Louisburg) 2-3
(Fall 0:41)

Week 4 Athlete of the Week: Kaven Bartlett



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

KAVEN BARTLETT, SENIOR, WRESTLING

Louisburg senior Kaven Bartlett started 2023 in the best way possible – with a tournament win – and Bartlett set a career milestone in the process. Bartlett picked up career win No. 100 on Saturday during the Louisburg Wildcat Classic as he went on to win the 138-pound tournament title with a 7-2 decision over Anderson County's A.J. Schaffer.

Bartlett also helped the Wildcats to a team title in their home tournament. It was their first Wildcat Classic championship since 1998. On the season, Bartlett is 19-0 and is currently ranked No. 3 in Class 4A at 138 pounds.

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: Adyson Ross

Week 2: Colin Brown

Week 3: Colyer Wingfield



The collage features several elements: the Ironhorse Family & Cosmetic Dentistry logo with a horse head icon; a QR code; a photo of a family (two boys and two girls) smiling; a close-up of a person's smile with braces; and text describing dental services. At the bottom, two addresses are listed.

IRONHORSE
FAMILY & COSMETIC DENTISTRY

Dr. Laura's Orthodontics
LOVE YOUR SMILE

Comfortable dental care for the entire family
No shots, no drills, no pain
We offer sedation dentistry
Orthodontics, TMJ and Sleep Apnea Treatment

5321 W. 151st Street, Leawood, KS 66224 (913) 851-9969
1270 W. Amity, Louisburg, KS 66053 (913) 837-3096

Bartlett excited to continue wrestling career at Newman University



Louisburg senior Kaven Bartlett, who is currently 15-0 on the season and ranked No. 3 in Class 4A at 138 pounds, signed his letter of intent last month to wrestle at Newman University.

His high school wrestling career might be coming to an end, but Kaven Bartlett wasn't about to leave a sport behind that he loved since he could remember.

Bartlett, a state medalist for the Louisburg wrestling team, has always dreamed to wrestle in college and that came true last month when the Wildcat senior decided to make it official.

Bartlett signed his letter of intent to wrestle for Newman University – an NCAA Division II program in Wichita. It was a difficult decision at times for the Louisburg senior, but he couldn't be more excited to get started.

"Officially signing to wrestle in college has been a dream of mine since I was 4 years old," Bartlett said. "Being able to achieve this dream, and continue my wrestling career after high school, means the world to me. I don't believe that I will ever be able to get away from the sport of wrestling.

"The past year I visited several colleges to see how their programs for academics and athletics were. One of the most important things I was looking for was which community felt most like home. I eventually over time got my options down to two colleges. After several visits and watching both teams compete I chose Newman University."

Newman provided the perfect outlet for Bartlett and his love for the sport. It all started with the coaching staff.



Louisburg senior Kaven Bartlett signed his letter of intent to wrestle at Newman University. Sitting next to Kaven is his mother Angela and his sister Kallee. Standing is his father, Jason.

Newman head coach Ryan Smith has been a big part of the Jets program as he is in his 15th season as the team's leader and his 19th year overall.

Smith has coached 13 national qualifiers and had five MIAA individual champions over that time. Bartlett is excited to work under an experienced coach with a young roster.

"Newman University has several national All-Americans and national champions," Bartlett said. "Coach Smith invited me to a camp in Maize with the team where I got to meet the whole coaching staff. A lot of the staff is young and have wrestled for Newman themselves. They welcomed me and made me feel comfortable straight away."

It also helped that Newman fit his academic style as well. Bartlett plans to have a double major in Radiology Technician and Sonography.

Now that the decision process is over, Bartlett is hoping to

end his high school career on a good note as he is currently 15-0 on the season and ranked No. 3 in Class 4A at 138 pounds.

He also has high goals for himself wants he gets to college.

“When I first arrive on campus I plan on getting to know the team and find a place to fit in,” Bartlett said. “My athletic goals are to better my wrestling skills and contribute as much as I can to the team.”

Top 10 Louisburg Sports Stories of 2022



It was a successful, and eventful, 2022 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 brought back state hardware.

Below are the top stories from 2022, 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 2023 will bring. Thank you to everyone for their support and can't wait for it all to begin again.



10. Louisburg golf qualifies for state

FORT SCOTT – As the scores were rolling in, the Louisburg golf team was a little worried.

The Wildcats were in jeopardy of not qualifying for state after a few of the golfers didn't have the scores they were hoping for in the Class 4A regional tournament in Fort Scott.

Chanute and Independence had already assured themselves of a spot, but the third place team was up in the air as the top three teams automatically qualify for state.

As it turned out, the Wildcats had nothing to worry about as they edged Paola by four strokes to finish in third with a 357 to secure their third consecutive spot in the 4A state

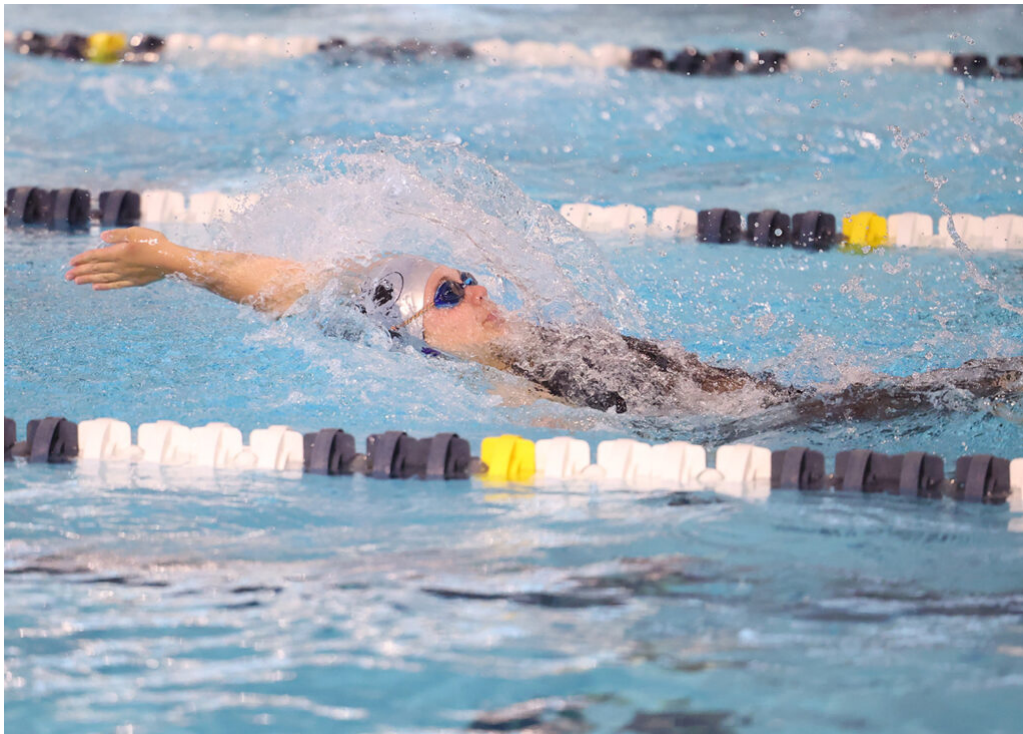
tournament.

Seniors A.J. Arriola, Sam Wheeler, Ian Kirkpatrick, Johnny Thompson, along with juniors Jackson Olson and Nick Lancaster, advanced to the state tournament.

Arriola carded a 78 and finished as a regional runner-up, as he was just two strokes behind regional champion Drayton Cleaver of Chanute.

As for Olson, the Louisburg junior set a personal record by six strokes to shoot an 81 and took fourth overall. Those personal bests were enough to get the Wildcats into that third place spot.

At state, Arriola and Wheeler finished as the team's top two golfers. Arriola carded a 97 to take 59th overall, while Wheeler finished with a 98 and came in 66th.



9. Brueggen's earns school's first

state swim medal

LENEXA – Even though she is just a freshman, Sabra Brueggen is already putting a stamp on her high school swim career at Louisburg High School.

It all came to a rousing end on May 21 as Brueggen earned her first state medal at the Class 5-1A Kansas State Swim and Diving Championships at the Shawnee Mission School District Aquatic Center.

Brueggen became the first swimmer in school history to earn a state medal as she finished fifth in the 100-yard backstroke in 1:00.58.

On the day before in the preliminaries, Brueggen also took fifth in a season-best time of 1:00.15.

“Medaling as freshman means the world to me, and it proves to me that all of my hard work for all of these years, has paid off,” Brueggen said. “I feel like I performed my absolute best at state, and I was very happy with the results. It gives me confidence that I will have a bright future representing OzPaLou at the state swim meets.”

She nearly had a second medal in the 50 freestyle. Brueggen put together a season-best time of 25.26 seconds, but finished ninth overall. It was the same finish she had the in the preliminaries.

The top eight in each event earn a state medal as she was just .06 away from earning another spot on the medal stand.



8. Harding takes over as Wildcat football coach

The Louisburg football program had a different leader on the sidelines this past season.

The USD 416 Board of Education approved the hire of LHS assistant coach Drew Harding to be the team's new head coach in January after the district decided not to renew the contact of former coach Robert Ebenstein.

Harding spent the last five seasons as a Wildcat assistant coach, including time as a defensive coordinator. He is a 2010 Louisburg graduate and was a big part of the Wildcat program during his time as a student-athlete at Louisburg High School.

However, Harding didn't see himself be a head coach of any sport coming out of college.

"It means a lot," Harding said. "When I got out of school, I didn't get into education right away and started somewhere else. I decided to get into education because of the impact my former coaches at Louisburg had on me. To come full circle and

to be in the position that I am in now, is pretty surreal. I am really excited for the opportunity and hopefully I can have the same type of impact on student athletes as they come through the program.”

Ebenstein has the been the head coach the last five seasons and helped the Wildcats to a 30-18 record during that time, including a Frontier League and regional title in 2018. He had a winning record three of those five seasons.

He was also named the KFCA Coach of the Year during that season and was selected to be an assistant coach for the Kansas Shrine Bowl. He was an assistant coach for the Wildcat program for five years before earning the head coaching job.



7. Conley resigns a Louisburg head boys and girls soccer coach

Louisburg High School head boys and girls soccer coach Kyle Conley stepped down from his position after seven years.

He was recently hired to lead the boys and girls soccer programs at Blue Valley West, where he will serve as the head coach of both teams.

Conley, who also taught social studies at LHS, informed the players and parents of his decision on May 4. The Blue Valley Board of Education approved his hire on May 9.

"Making the decision to leave Louisburg was extremely difficult," Conley said. "The players and parents, both past and present, made this decision tough. No parents or players caused this decision. I am very thankful to Mr. (Dave) Tappan and Mr. (Darin) Gagnebin for giving me this opportunity to coach and teach at Louisburg. The amount of support that my teams, my family and I received from Louisburg soccer parents and the community was incredible."

Bobby Bovaird was hired as the new boys head coach, while Ben York returned to the program as the new assistant. York was also named the girls head coach after serving 13 years as the boys head coach previous to Conley.

Conley has the been head girls coach at Louisburg since its inception in 2016 and has led that program to four consecutive state final fours.

Twice, the Wildcats made the state championship game and finished runner-up on both occasions. He has guided the program to an 82-34-3 record.

Conley took over the boys program in 2016 and finished with a 77-32-3 record. He led the Wildcats to two state final fours during that span, including a third place finish in 2020.

"I am so proud of the things that our student athletes in the soccer programs have accomplished both on and off the soccer field," Conley said. "I will always cherish the memories that we have made here with the Louisburg soccer programs."



6. Girls cross country qualifies for state, Vohs earns state medal

WAMEGO – For the second consecutive season, Emma Vohs left the Class 4A state cross country meet with more than was she arrived with.

Vohs earned her second state medal at Wamego Country Club as she finished 10th overall with a time of 20 minutes and 51 seconds. The Louisburg junior did what she set out to accomplish.

“I was so excited to win another state medal this season and couldn’t be happier that I reached my goal for that race, which was placing top 10,” Vohs said. “The race was a tougher course, as was the competition this year, but I am blessed to run with such talented girls that push me to do better each race.”

Vohs led the Lady Cat team that qualified for state for the sixth consecutive season. As a team, Louisburg finished eighth overall with 208 points.

A week earlier at regionals, the team of Vohs, Maddy Rhamy, Lola Edwards, Nova Ptacek, Bree Gassman, Erin Apple and Madison Huggins finished third to punch their ticket to state

“It never gets old seeing the joy in the team’s eyes when they hear they qualified for state,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “The girls work hard to accomplish this goal each year, and because of their dedication to their sport, they achieve great things even if they might not make it, but they did.

“The program has built itself and I’m just glad to be a part of it. Yes, we put together a training plan to accomplish great things at the end of the season, but the runners do the work to get there. It takes self discipline, motivation and guts to be there at the end of the season.”



5. Wildcat wrestling medals 3 at state

Louisburg wrestling has had its fair share of state medalists in its long history, but what the Wildcats accomplished in February at the Tony’s Pizza Events Center in Salina was something the program had never seen before.

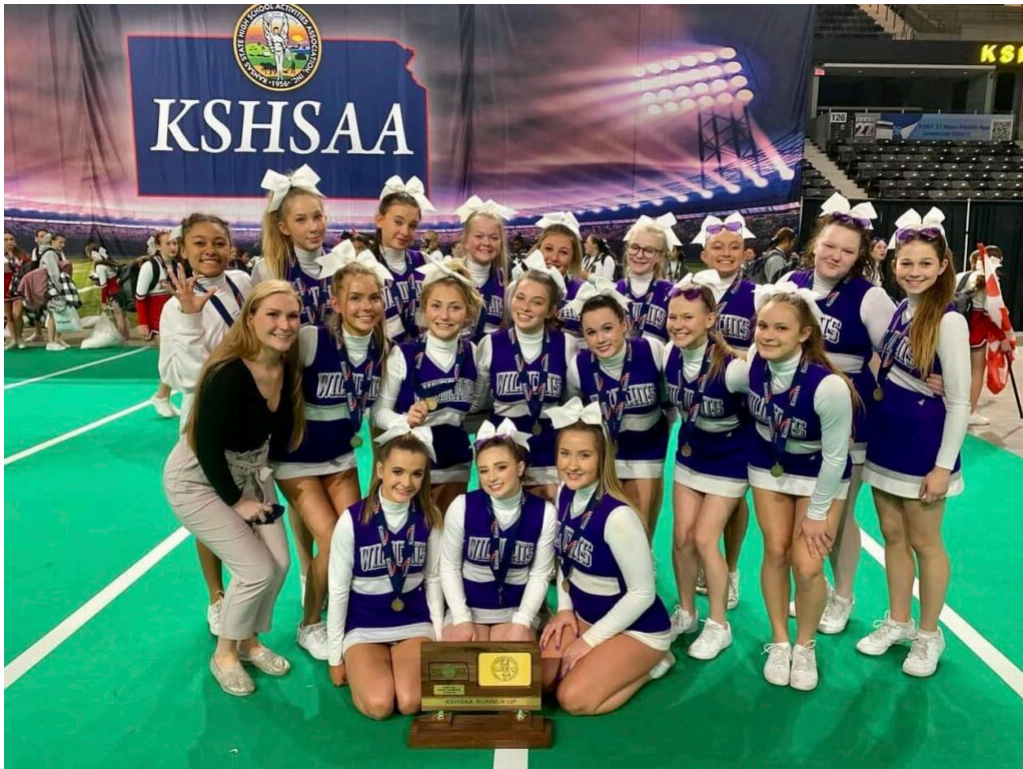
The Wildcats left the Class 4A state tournament with three state medalists, the most for one year in program history.

Aiden Barker (195 pounds), Kaven Bartlett (126) and Elijah Eslinger (285) each finished in the top six in their respective weight classes and put together their best performances of the season. It was also the first time each of them earned a state medal.

"This season was the most state placers we've had in a single year in program history," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Prior to 1992, KSHSAA only medaled the top 4 in each weight. In both 1988 and 1989, we had two top-4 placers and one top-6 placer, but this really shows how the program is progressing and developing. We nearly had four medalists, too."

Barker, a senior, was a favorite for a medal heading into Salina and finished fifth overall with a 13-1 major decision over Ottawa's Jared Ferguson in the fifth-place match.

Bartlett and Eslinger also left lasting impressions on the Wildcat program as each medaled sixth overall after both nearly turned their brackets upside down as they advanced to the semifinals on Friday. They both guaranteed themselves a medal on the first day.



4. Louisburg cheer earns state runner-up performance

TOPEKA – It has almost become commonplace to see the Louisburg High School cheer squad in the finals of the Class 4A Gameday Spirit Showcase.

However, that doesn't mean the cheerleaders are any less excited about it.

For the second straight season, the Wildcats finished as the state runner-up in the Class 4A competition at the Stormont-Vail Events Center. They finished with a score of 79.45 and were one point behind champion Paola.

It is the fourth straight season that the Wildcats have finished in the top three, which included a state championship in 2019.

"I am so unbelievably and incredibly proud of this team," Louisburg coach Marissa Morrow said. "This positivity and attitude that these girls have shown this year have been the

key to our success. I had no doubt that the material and performances we brought on Saturday had the potential to do well, but it was the girls who made it possible to pull it together. They were all such competitors and left it all out on the mat, and I couldn't ask for more. We also could not have done it without the support of our amazing cheer families."

Members of the team are Sydney Dudzik, Bella Feikert, Zoe Cutshaw, Caroline Dugger, Elizabeth George, Addison Drake, Brooklyn Harmon, Adison Vargo, Maddy Carpenter-Ross, Sienna Finch, Alayna Stohs, Alaina Dudzik, Maddie O'Keefe, Liz Willming, Kayleigh Ramsey, Taryn Osborn, Anna Brizendine and Jocelyn Burk.



3. LHS football secures Frontier League title

With just over a minute left in regulation, Louisburg was staring at the possibility of their first league loss and was

watching an outright Frontier League title slip away.

Spring Hill scored a touchdown and took a four-point lead with 1 minute and 12 seconds left. Things were looking bleak for the Wildcats.

As it turned out, 52 seconds was all the Wildcats needed to pull off one of the season's most memorable moments. Louisburg quarterback Declan Battle found junior Caden Caplinger in the endzone on an 18-yard touchdown pass with 20 seconds remaining to give the Wildcats a 20-17 victory.

The win was the Wildcats' seventh straight on the season and clinched the team's first Frontier League championship since 2018.

"There weren't a lot of people who thought we could be league champions," Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. "I don't think it was anything that people expected out of us, and the Frontier League is really good. For this group to come to work, get better every day and to see success is pretty sweet."

The win was extra special for 16 Louisburg seniors as they were also able to celebrate that league title on Senior Night.

Jackson Kush, Nathan Apple, Carson Wade, Isaiah Whitley, Riley Van Eaton, J.R. Rooney, Will Hutsell, Brayton Brueggen, Christian Golladay, Nathan Vincent, Jase Hovey, Mack Newell, Hunter Moore, Mason Dobbins, Corbin Hamman and Layne Ryals all got to end their final regular season home game with a win.

"The Frontier League title means so much to me and this team," Rooney said. "As a team before the season, the seniors wrote down our goals, and league champs was on everyone's list. To clinch it on senior night was amazing. Going undefeated at home, to win it on our field in front of our town – it was an indescribable feeling."



2. Wildcat volleyball finishes fourth at state

HUTCHINSON – The state tournament ended the way it started for the Louisburg volleyball team – with a loss to Towanda-Circle.

Still, it was everything that happened in between that made for a lot of lasting memories for the Wildcat players.

Louisburg went 2-1 in pool play at the Hutchinson Sports Arena, which included a revenge win over Tonganoxie in the final match of the day. That gave the Lady Cats a spot in the state semifinals Saturday, where they finished fourth in Class 4A.

The Wildcats suffered a 2-0 loss to both Bishop Miege and Circle, but they still ended their season as one of the state's top teams.

"I am extremely proud of this team," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "Looking at how we started this season, and our ups and downs along the way, it is a huge accomplishment for

them to have come together as a team at the end of the season and play our best volleyball yet. It was apparent in the last couple of weeks that they really started playing for each other and capitalizing on the strong team bonds they built throughout the year.”

It was all thanks to an upset the previous week. Louisburg defeated the state’s No. 1 seed, Baldwin, in the sub-state championship match to earn the state berth.

The Wildcats, the No. 9 seed, knocked off No. 1 seed Baldwin, 25-18 and 25-19, at Baldwin High School in the finals of the Class 4A sub-state tournament. That win puts Louisburg in the state tournament for the first time since 2019.

Members of the team are Emma Prettyman, Adyson Ross, Claire Brown, Allie Kennedy, Ashlyn Berck, Delaney Nelson, Izzy Moreland, Bronwynn Williams, Caileigh Kilgore, Megan Quinn, Hailey Sword and Madelyn Williams.



1. Wildcat boys take third at state

track; Koontz, Caplinger win state titles; Lady Cats medal nine

WICHITA – For the second consecutive season, the Louisburg boys track and field team brought home hardware from the Class 4A state meet.

After winning the state championship in 2021, the Wildcats once again found their way to the podium in Wichita as they finished third overall with 67 points.

Andale won the state championship with 101 points and Chanute was the state runner-up with 71.

Louisburg got points from a lot of different areas as the Wildcats medaled in 10 events and had 12 medalists overall, including all three of their relays.

Louisburg senior Tom Koontz won a pair of state titles in the hurdles, while sophomore Caden Caplinger captured the gold medal in the pole vault.



“I am not going to complain at all,” Koontz said. “I believe

we came here with less people than we did last year and everyone did their best. Even though we didn't get exactly what we wanted, third place is still a great achievement."

What he couldn't believe was he had just won his first state title in the 300 hurdles and Koontz did so by breaking a 14-year-old school record. Koontz ran a time of 38.98 seconds to break R.J. Saunders' record of 39.16 set in 2008 to earn the gold.

It turned out to be his second state title of the day as he also earned the gold medal in the 110-meter high hurdles with a time of 14.61 seconds. Koontz won the state in that event last season as well.

Caplinger cleared a lot of his marks in the pole vault and did so in convincing fashion as he was able to win a state title in just his second year with the program.



Last season at state, Caplinger medaled eighth after he cleared 12-6. A year later, the Louisburg sophomore improved his mark by two feet and is a state champion.

It was an impressive showing from Caplinger as he didn't miss an attempt until he tried for 15 feet at the end. He entered the competition at 12-6 and had five straight successful clearances.

"At first I was really nervous, but then it just kind of turned into a routine thing," Caplinger said. "I started going over heights consistently and the rest just kind of fell into place. I cleared 14-6 earlier this week twice in a row, so I knew I could do it. I was still a little nervous though."

As for the Lady Cats, Delaney Wright left the state meet with three medals. Wright, who has been coming back from a severe injury for most of the season, finished as the state runner-up in the 400-meter dash, third place in the 200 dash and fifth in the long jump.

A season ago, Wright was the state champion in all three events, but couldn't get the repeat she was hoping for.

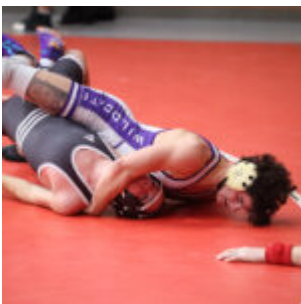


“Going into state I knew I still wasn’t where I want to be due to my injury a couple months ago,” Wright said. “But I wanted to attack it still and give it all I had. I am blessed I was there to compete and earn three medals cause in the beginning I didn’t even know if I was going to compete my senior year.”

In all, the Lady Cats put together a strong state performance as they medaled in nine events and finished with 40 team points and took sixth overall. They were just eight points away from the third place spot, and a plaque.

“Once again the state qualifiers did an amazing job,” Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. “They all performed well and most beyond expectations. To leave the meet finishing in sixth place was outstanding. We left with lots of medals and great memories.”

Wildcats place fourth at Tongie; Bartlett wins 138-pound title



Louisburg senior Kaven Bartlett works for a pin Saturday during the Randy Starcher Invitational at Tongnaoxie High School. Bartlett won the 138-pound class.

TONGANOXIE – The Louisburg wrestling team competed in its

first individual bracket tournament of the season Saturday at the Randy Starcher Invitational.

It was a strong showing for the Wildcats as they finished fourth in the team standings with 174.5 points in the 11-team tournament at Tonganoxie High School. Louisburg also had three wrestlers earn spots in the championship match.

Tonganoxie won the tournament with 251.5 points and Clay Center was second at 225. Savannah (Mo.) was third with 176.

"I was pretty pleased with everything on Saturday," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "We were in and out of second place throughout the day, but in the end a few things just didn't go our way. Tonganoxie is a strong team, and they held the lead for most of the tournament.

"The great thing is that the teams finishing in third through sixth place were only three points apart from one another. We even finished ahead of a state-ranked team, Independence, that was at full strength with its lineup."

Wildcat senior Kaven Bartlett, who is currently ranked No. 3 in Class 4A at 138 pounds, lived up to his ranking as he finished the day with five wins. He opened the tournament with a win by tech fall, but then recorded three straight pins.

Bartlett squared off with Independence's Josh Lawrie in the final and scored a 3-0 decision. He is now currently 15-0 on the season.

"Kaven is showing so much confidence and determination this season," Bovaird said. "He's on a mission, that's for sure, and he's emerging as an incredible leader for the team. Whether it's at practice or in between matches at tournaments, he does a phenomenal job working with his teammates. He was solid on the mat this weekend, especially on his feet."



Louisburg senior Elijah Eslinger put his opponent from Independence on his back Saturday. Eslinger finished second at 285 pounds.

Another senior, Elijah Eslinger, also entered the tournament undefeated and was ranked No. 5 at 285 pounds in Class 4A. He breezed through his first four matches as he won all four by pin in under a minute.

Eslinger then squared off with Clay Center's Luke Young in the championship. Young, who is ranked No. 3 in Class 4A, pinned Eslinger in the first period and the Louisburg senior finished second overall. He is 14-1 on the year.

Sophomore Jay McCaskill also found himself in the top two at 157 pounds. After he received a bye in the first round, he recorded three straight pins to advance to the first place match.

McCaskill faced off with Clay Center's Talyn Pfizenmaier in the championship and McCaskill fell in a 6-0 decision to take second. McCaskill is currently 11-3 on the season.



Louisburg sophomore Jay McCaskill finished second at 157 pounds.

"Elijah and Jay both ran into a couple of ranked kids from Clay Center in their finals match," Bovaird said. "Jay was able to hang with his opponent for most of the match. He's showing a lot of smoothness and confidence on the mat, which is great for a sophomore to be showing. Elijah has grown so much from last season to this one, and I'm seeing a lot of diversity with his wrestling. He's opened up his repertoire of moves, which is going to be huge for the postseason."

Five other Wildcats also left Tonganoxie with some hardware. Sophomore Will Showalter (106 pounds), junior J'Lee Collins (126), sophomore Logan Henry (132), senior Jesse Murphy (144) and senior Trace Eslinger (215) all earned fourth place medals.

"With this being our first tournament of the year with individual brackets, it was nice to see the guys win some hardware," Bovaird said. "They won their first medals of the season, and it was the first ever varsity medal for several of them. Our younger guys are showing so much growth this season, and it's pretty exciting to see their progress."



Louisburg junior J'Lee Collins was one of five Wildcats to earn fourth place medals Saturday in Tonganoxie.

Now the Wildcats are off for the rest of 2022 and will open the 2023 part of their schedule at home on Jan. 7 when they host the Louisburg Invitational.

Bovaird has liked what he has seen so far and is looking forward to what the rest of the season has in store.

"We're entering the break with a 5-5 dual record and a fourth place finish at a pretty tough tournament," Bovaird said. "Over half of our varsity wrestlers have .500 records or better, and we've been able to field a full lineup at most of our competitions. We're missing a key returner with Ashton Moore, who's certified to wrestle at 175 this season. We'll know more soon about when he's going to be back for us. There's still a bunch of newer wrestlers who are filling it at varsity, and I love the mindset that they're bringing to the mats."

106

Myke McKittrick (0-3) placed 6th.

- Round 1 – Mason Gibbons (Independence) 11-0 won by fall over Myke McKitrick (Louisburg) 0-3 (Fall 3:55)
- Round 2 – Myke McKitrick (Louisburg) 0-3 received a bye () (Bye)
- Round 3 – Will Showalter (Louisburg) 6-7 won by fall over Myke McKitrick (Louisburg) 0-3 (Fall 2:37)
- 5th Place Match – Myles Curry (Topeka-Highland Park) 7-3 won by fall over Myke McKitrick (Louisburg) 0-3 (Fall 3:32)

106

Will Showalter (6-7) placed 4th and scored 9.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Will Showalter (Louisburg) 6-7 received a bye () (Bye)
- Round 2 – Mason Gibbons (Independence) 11-0 won by tech fall over Will Showalter (Louisburg) 6-7 (TF-1.5 3:02 (16-1))
- Round 3 – Will Showalter (Louisburg) 6-7 won by fall over Myke McKitrick (Louisburg) 0-3 (Fall 2:37)
- 3rd Place Match – Miller Coffman (Clay Center Community) 5-4 won by fall over Will Showalter (Louisburg) 6-7 (Fall 0:00)

113

Broden Vargo (1-3) placed 6th and scored 8.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Broden Vargo (Louisburg) 1-3 won by forfeit over SCRATCH-Christopher SCRATCH-Switzer (East (Kansas City)) 2-6 (For.)
- Round 3 – Broden Vargo (Louisburg) 1-3 received a bye () (Bye)
- Round 4 – Kayden Chance (Frontenac) 9-4 won by fall over

Broden Vargo (Louisburg) 1-3 (Fall 0:23)

- Round 5 – Jordan Bauswell (Tonganoxie) 5-6 won by fall over Broden Vargo (Louisburg) 1-3 (Fall 3:52)
- 5th Place Match – Kyle Sloan (Frontenac) 4-2 won by fall over Broden Vargo (Louisburg) 1-3 (Fall 0:29)

120

Keegan Rogers (3-8) placed 9th and scored 2.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Cash Wilderman (Frontenac) 14-0 won by fall over Keegan Rogers (Louisburg) 3-8 (Fall 1:36)
- Round 2 – Hawken Andrews (Eudora) 12-4 won by fall over Keegan Rogers (Louisburg) 3-8 (Fall 1:25)
- Round 3 – Clayton Crookham (Tonganoxie) 7-5 won by fall over Keegan Rogers (Louisburg) 3-8 (Fall 0:57)
- Round 4 – Jack Fairbank (Independence) 4-8 won by fall over Keegan Rogers (Louisburg) 3-8 (Fall 2:58)
- 9th Place Match – Keegan Rogers (Louisburg) 3-8 won by fall over Chris Switzer (East (Kansas City)) 0-5 (Fall 4:24)

126

J`Lee Collins (7-6) placed 4th and scored 11.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Dax Duffett (Tonganoxie) 3-2 won by fall over J`Lee Collins (Louisburg) 7-6 (Fall 4:35)
- Round 2 – J`Lee Collins (Louisburg) 7-6 won by fall over Owen Leffert (Tonganoxie) 5-11 (Fall 0:34)
- Round 3 – JT Alton (Clay Center Community) 8-4 won by decision over J`Lee Collins (Louisburg) 7-6 (Dec 8-6)
- Round 4 – J`Lee Collins (Louisburg) 7-6 won by fall over Noah Van Foeken (Eudora) 7-9 (Fall 1:01)
- Round 5 – Gage Schottel (Savannah) 8-3 won by fall over

J`Lee Collins (Louisburg) 7-6 (Fall 1:54)

132

Mika McKitrick (5-8) placed 5th.

- Round 1 – Kohen Wright (Independence) 12-0 won by tech fall over Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) 5-8 (TF-1.5 3:09 (24-8))
- Round 2 – Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) 5-8 won by major decision over Tanner Yankovich (Eudora) 9-7 (MD 10-2)
- Round 3 – Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) 5-8 won by decision over Caiben Shaffner (Clay Center Community) 0-4 (Dec 8-3)
- Round 4 – Jomar Pero (Frontenac) 7-4 won by fall over Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) 5-8 (Fall 3:12)
- 5th Place Match – Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) 5-8 won by fall over Payton Coleman (Tonganoxie) 2-9 (Fall 0:33)

132

Logan Henry (4-3) placed 4th and scored 16.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Logan Henry (Louisburg) 4-3 won by fall over Payton Coleman (Tonganoxie) 2-9 (Fall 0:40)
- Round 2 – Logan Henry (Louisburg) 4-3 received a bye () (Bye)
- Round 3 – Logan Henry (Louisburg) 4-3 won by fall over Bryson Jeffers (Savannah) 2-11 (Fall 0:29)
- Round 5 – Bergen Souder (Frontenac) 4-1 won by fall over Logan Henry (Louisburg) 4-3 (Fall 1:27)
- 3rd Place Match – Jomar Pero (Frontenac) 7-4 won by fall over Logan Henry (Louisburg) 4-3 (Fall 2:47)

138

Kaven Bartlett (15-0) placed 1st and scored 32.5 team points.

- Round 1 – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 15-0 won by tech fall over Scott Sloan (Frontenac) 1-4 (TF-1.5 3:11 (16-0))
- Round 2 – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 15-0 won by fall over Wesley Borger (Eudora) 8-8 (Fall 0:49)
- Round 4 – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 15-0 won by fall over Aiden Lessard (Lansing) 2-8 (Fall 1:14)
- Round 5 – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 15-0 won by fall over Deagen Pasley (Savannah) 10-7 (Fall 0:55)
- 1st Place Match – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 15-0 won by decision over Josh Lawrie (Independence) 9-3 (Dec 3-0)

144

Jesse Murphy (10-5) placed 4th and scored 18.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 10-5 won by fall over Todd Brown (Tonganoxie) 3-2 (Fall 2:36)
- Round 3 – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 10-5 won by fall over Chase Davis (Frontenac) 9-5 (Fall 1:31)
- Quarterfinal – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 10-5 won by fall over Taylor Dumas (Clay Center Community) 10-7 (Fall 4:30)
- Semifinal – Justin Shields (Lansing) 15-1 won by fall over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 10-5 (Fall 1:47)
- 3rd Place Match – Lincoln LaFave (Savannah) 11-3 won by fall over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 10-5 (Fall 2:43)

150

Colin Robinson (0-7) placed 10th and scored 0.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Braeden VanDonge (Eudora) 9-2 won by fall over Colin Robinson (Louisburg) 0-7 (Fall 1:10)
- Round 2 – Wyatt Frazier (Frontenac) 11-3 won by fall over Colin Robinson (Louisburg) 0-7 (Fall 3:16)
- Round 3 – Tommy Messersmith (Tonganoxie) 13-2 won by fall over Colin Robinson (Louisburg) 0-7 (Fall 0:50)
- Round 4 – Juma Byaombe (East (Kansas City)) 4-8 won by fall over Colin Robinson (Louisburg) 0-7 (Fall 0:50)
- 9th Place Match – Austin Howell (Lansing) 6-9 won by fall over Colin Robinson (Louisburg) 0-7 (Fall 1:11)

157

Jay McCaskill (11-3) placed 2nd and scored 26.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Jay McCaskill (Louisburg) 11-3 received a bye () (Bye)
- Round 2 – Jay McCaskill (Louisburg) 11-3 won by fall over Justice Rockhold (Lansing) 2-2 (Fall 0:53)
- Round 3 – Jay McCaskill (Louisburg) 11-3 won by fall over Jack Messersmith (Tonganoxie) 6-7 (Fall 2:23)
- Round 5 – Jay McCaskill (Louisburg) 11-3 won by fall over Mikia Hill (East (Kansas City)) 6-5 (Fall 0:57)
- 1st Place Match – Talyn Pfizenmaier (Clay Center Community) 9-1 won by decision over Jay McCaskill (Louisburg) 11-3 (Dec 6-0)

165

Vance Hahn (0-15) placed 6th and scored 3.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Alex Williams (Frontenac) 8-6 won by fall over Vance Hahn (Louisburg) 0-15 (Fall 1:05)
- Round 2 – Colton Brusven (Tonganoxie) 7-2 won by fall over Vance Hahn (Louisburg) 0-15 (Fall 1:14)
- Round 3 – Chance Phillips (Savannah) 9-4 won by fall over Vance Hahn (Louisburg) 0-15 (Fall 0:48)
- Round 4 – Brett Loader (Clay Center Community) 14-2 won by fall over Vance Hahn (Louisburg) 0-15 (Fall 0:59)
- Round 5 – Thomas Romero (Eudora) 1-4 won by fall over Vance Hahn (Louisburg) 0-15 (Fall 1:08)

175

Brecon Klugman (2-8) placed 9th and scored 0.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Braedon Speer (Eudora) 14-2 won by fall over Brecon Klugman (Louisburg) 2-8 (Fall 0:49)
- Round 3 – Robert Ragland (Savannah) 3-9 won by fall over Brecon Klugman (Louisburg) 2-8 (Fall 0:27)
- Round 4 – Tucker Jackson (Clay Center Community) 9-1 won by fall over Brecon Klugman (Louisburg) 2-8 (Fall 1:29)
- Round 5 – Adrian Burney (Topeka-Highland Park) 8-4 won by fall over Brecon Klugman (Louisburg) 2-8 (Fall 0:38)
- 9th Place Match – Brecon Klugman (Louisburg) 2-8 received a bye () (Bye)

190

Brayden Yoder (10-5) placed 5th and scored 11.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) 10-5 won by decision over Cael Dye (Tonganoxie) 13-3 (Dec 4-3)
- Round 3 – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) 10-5 won by decision over Thomas Ramsey (East (Kansas City)) 8-4 (Dec 9-6)
- Quarterfinal – Isaiah Melugin (Independence) 6-6 won in

sudden victory – 1 over Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) 10-5 (SV-1 11-9)

- Cons. Round 1 – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) 10-5 won by fall over Jacob Holt (Frontenac) 8-5 (Fall 5:14)
- 5th Place Match – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) 10-5 won by injury default over Ethan Tiers (Clay Center Community) 12-4 (Inj. 0:00)

215

Trace Eslinger (10-3) placed 4th and scored 18.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 10-3 won by fall over Branden Gregory (Eudora) 2-9 (Fall 1:25)
- Round 2 – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 10-3 won by fall over Isaiah White (East (Kansas City)) 0-5 (Fall 0:40)
- Round 3 – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 10-3 won by fall over Angel Contraras (Kansas City-JC Harmon) 5-3 (Fall 2:47)
- Round 5 – Caden Baragary (Lansing) 11-1 won by fall over Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 10-3 (Fall 1:04)
- 3rd Place Match – Braylon Berry (Clay Center Community) 14-3 won by fall over Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 10-3 (Fall 1:52)

215

Kyle Oram (3-3) placed 6th.

- Round 1 – Braylon Berry (Clay Center Community) 14-3 won by fall over Kyle Oram (Louisburg) 3-3 (Fall 0:47)
- Round 3 – Kyle Oram (Louisburg) 3-3 received a bye () (Bye)
- Round 4 – Hunter Benedict (Tonganoxie) 8-2 won by fall over Kyle Oram (Louisburg) 3-3 (Fall 0:13)

- Round 5 – Kyle Oram (Louisburg) 3-3 won by fall over Jacob Lorraine (Savannah) 3-8 (Fall 2:32)
- 5th Place Match – Angel Contraras (Kansas City-JC Harmon) 5-3 won by fall over Kyle Oram (Louisburg) 3-3 (Fall 1:29)

285

Elijah Eslinger (14-1) placed 2nd and scored 20.0 team points.

- Round 1 – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 14-1 won by fall over Jake Garris (Independence) 4-8 (Fall 0:39)
- Round 2 – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 14-1 won by fall over Brandon Collins (Topeka-Highland Park) 3-11 (Fall 0:36)
- Round 3 – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 14-1 won by fall over Kevin Whitten (Eudora) 7-9 (Fall 0:11)
- Round 4 – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 14-1 won by fall over Gavin Rhoads (Tonganoxie) 7-4 (Fall 0:38)
- Round 5 – Luke Young (Clay Center Community) 16-1 won by fall over Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 14-1 (Fall 0:17)

Five Wildcats earn all-tournament team honors at December Duals



Louisburg senior Jesse Murphy works for a pin Friday during the December Duals, held at Louisburg High School. Murphy was one of five Wildcats to earn all-tournament team honors.

The Louisburg wrestling team had its home opener Friday as it hosted the December Duals, which brought four strong wrestling programs to town.

Baldwin, Burlington, Concordia and Independence provided a competitive round robin dual tournament.

Although Louisburg finished fourth overall, the Wildcats had several individuals who had a big night.

Seniors Kaven Bartlett, Elijah Eslinger and sophomore Jay McCaskill each finished the tournament undefeated. Seniors Jesse Murphy and Trace Eslinger went 3-1 in their respective weight classes.

All five Wildcat wrestlers were named to the December Duals All-Tournament Team.

Bartlett, who jumped up to No. 3 in the KWCA Class 4A state rankings at 138 pounds, took care of business with three pins and a major decision of Independence's Josh Lawrie.

Elijah Eslinger, who is currently ranked as the No. 5 heavyweight in Class 4A, also had a strong showing with four pins – three of which were under a minute.

McCaskill thrived at 157 pounds on Friday. The Louisburg sophomore finished with three pins and a 16-4 major decision of Concordia's Bergun Kindel.

At 150 pounds, Murphy suffered just one loss, which was by pin to Baldwin's Jaiden Michael. Murphy went on to record three pins of his own.



Louisburg senior Trace Eslinger works for a pin during a 215-pound match. Eslinger earned all-tournament team honors.

Trace Eslinger also put together a strong performance at 215 pounds. Trace finished with two pins, before falling by pin to Baldwin's Conner Murry.

As a team, the Wildcats with a 54-30 victory over Burlington, but the competition grew as the night went on. Louisburg would fall to Concordia (53-28), Baldwin (60-21) and Independence (48-32) to take fourth place.

Also earning multiple wins on the night for Louisburg was junior J'Lee Collins at 126 pounds and sophomore Brayden Yoder at 190 pounds.

The Wildcats are back in action at 6 p.m. tonight as they host Olathe West in dual at Louisburg Middle School. Louisburg will then travel to Tonganoxie for a tournament Saturday in its final action before the holiday break.

Match #1 Round 1

Louisburg defeated Burlington 54-30

- **106** – Will Showalter (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- **113** – Ryan Hoyt (Burlington) over Hayden Heffernon (Louisburg) Fall 1:59
- **120** – Greysen Dixon (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- **126** – J`Lee Collins (Louisburg) over Ethan Bartley (Burlington) Fall 1:28
- **132** – Owen McManus (Burlington) over Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) Fall 1:23
- **138** – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) over Lincoln Wright (Burlington) Fall 0:53
- **144** – Tucker Williams (Burlington) over Colin Robinson (Louisburg) Fall 2:25
- **150** – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) over Aden McManus (Burlington) Fall 0:25
- **157** – Jay McCaskill (Louisburg) over Hunter Cole (Burlington) Fall 1:33
- **165** – Karson Bangs (Burlington) over Vance Hahn (Louisburg) Fall 1:38
- **175** – Sabian Mann (Burlington) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- **190** – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) over Brayden Riggs (Burlington) Fall 5:48
- **215** – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- **285** – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) over Mason Neff (Burlington) Fall 0:38

Match #2 Round 2

Concordia defeated Louisburg 53-28

- **106** – Christian Belden (Concordia) over Will Showalter (Louisburg) Fall 0:57
- **113** – Ashton Dooley (Concordia) over Hayden Heffernon (Louisburg) Fall 0:35
- **120** – Koby Tyler (Concordia) over Greysen Dixon (Louisburg) Fall 1:00
- **126** – Drew Sterrett (Concordia) over J`Lee Collins (Louisburg) Fall 4:18
- **132** – Daniel Vines (Concordia) over Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) Fall 1:57
- **138** – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) over Easton Swihart (Concordia) Fall 2:22
- **144** – Torxsten Kindel (Concordia) over Jonas Briley (Louisburg) Fall 1:38
- **150** – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) over Dustin Sterrett (Concordia) Fall 2:37
- **157** – Jay McCaskill (Louisburg) over Bergun Kindel (Concordia) Maj 16-4
- **165** – Mason Eickmann (Concordia) over Vance Hahn (Louisburg) Fall 0:17
- **175** – Caleb Hanson (Concordia) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- **190** – Tracer Murdock (Concordia) over Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) Fall 0:50
- **215** – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) over Max Johnson (Concordia) Fall 1:20
- **285** – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) over Michael Ashland (Concordia) Fall 0:39
- Concordia's team score was adjusted by -1.0 for unsportsman like

Match #3 Round 3

Baldwin defeated Louisburg 60-21

- **106** – Asher Englert (Baldwin) over Will Showalter (Louisburg) Fall 2:26
- **113** – Jayden Westgate (Baldwin) over Hayden Heffernon (Louisburg) Fall 0:19
- **120** – Ayedin Johnson (Baldwin) over Greysen Dixon (Louisburg) Fall 1:08
- **126** – J`Lee Collins (Louisburg) over Gunnar Reichard (Baldwin) Dec 12-5
- **132** – Dalton Dempsey (Baldwin) over Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) Fall 1:51
- **138** – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) over Dayton Peterson (Baldwin) Fall 3:21
- **144** – Jesse Hopper (Baldwin) over Jonas Briley (Louisburg) Fall 1:18
- **150** – Jaiden Michael (Baldwin) over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) Fall 1:00
- **157** – Jay McCaskill (Louisburg) over Ian Bryan (Baldwin) Fall 1:58
- **165** – Dylan Williams (Baldwin) over Vance Hahn (Louisburg) Fall 0:33
- **175** – Wesley Martin (Baldwin) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- **190** – Jack Harvey (Baldwin) over Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) Fall 1:11
- **215** – Conner Murry (Baldwin) over Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) Fall 1:13
- **285** – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) over Jonathan Wren (Baldwin) Fall 3:28

Match #4 Round 4

Louisburg received a Bye

Match #5 Round 5

Independence defeated Louisburg 48-32

- **106** – Mason Gibbons (Independence) over Will Showalter (Louisburg) Fall 1:53
- **113** – Keith Sanders (Independence) over Hayden Heffernon (Louisburg) Fall 0:45
- **120** – Jack Fairbank (Independence) over Greysen Dixon (Louisburg) Fall 5:59
- **126** – Javius Gullick (Independence) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- **132** – Kohen Wright (Independence) over Mika McKitrick (Louisburg) Fall 2:21
- **138** – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) over Josh Lawrie (Independence) Maj 10-2
- **144** – Bryson Fulk (Independence) over Colin Robinson (Louisburg) Fall 1:30
- **150** – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) over Michael Williams (Independence) Fall 0:31
- **157** – Jay McCaskill (Louisburg) over Josh Hogge (Independence) Fall 0:43
- **165** – Luke Benedict (Independence) over Vance Hahn (Louisburg) Fall 1:49
- **175** – Josh Foreman (Independence) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
- **190** – Brayden Yoder (Louisburg) over Isaiah Melugin (Independence) Maj 18-5
- **215** – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) over Copeland Musgrove (Independence) Fall 1:03
- **285** – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) over Jake Garris (Independence) Fall 0:35

Wildcats finish third at Fort Scott to open season



FORT SCOTT – With about half of the team competing in its first varsity action, the Louisburg wrestling team put together a strong showing in its season debut.

The Wildcats traveled to the Fort Scott Dual Tournament last Friday and left with a third place finish and a 3-2 record on the day.

Louisburg got wins over Blue Valley Southwest, Gardner-Edgerton and Anderson County and suffered a pair of close losses to Atchison County and Fort Scott.

“We have a relatively young team, but I’d say they did an awesome job battling on the mat Friday night,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Our veteran wrestlers were scrappy and competitive, and our younger guys did their best to follow that lead.”

Seniors Kaven Bartlett and Elijah Eslinger led the Wildcats as both finished with a 5-0 record after each of them were ranked in the Class 4A preseason rankings.

Bartlett, who is ranked No. 6 at 138 pounds, recorded a pair of major decisions and a pin. He also battled Anderson County’s A.J. Schaffer to a 9-8 decision – an opponent he lost

to a year ago.

As for Eslinger, who is the No. 5 heavyweight in Class 4A, he also won all five matches. He earned three pins and one major decision.

"This season, we're going to see a lot more confidence from those two guys," Bovaird said. "They've been very driven since last season ended, and I feel like they're both on a mission to take things up a level from last year. Kaven had a great match against an Anderson County kid who'd beaten him last year.

"After getting a couple of quick takedowns and looking very strong on his feet, Kaven got caught in a weird move and found himself on his back, battling to stay alive. After fighting back to safety, he was then down 7-4, but he kept his composure and chipped away at that lead, one point at a time. He took the lead and held on for a 9-8 decision."

Sophomore Will Showalter was next on the team with four wins, including a pair of pins, at 106 pounds. Freshman Hayden Heffernon (113 pounds), junior J'Lee Collins (126), senior Jesse Murphy (152), sophomore Jay McCaskill (157), sophomore Braden Yoder (190) and senior Trace Eslinger (215) each finished with three wins

Senior Kyle Oram, who also wrestled at 215, won both of his matches. Freshman Keegan Rogers (120) and sophomore Mika McKitrick (132) both finished with a pair of wins.

Sophomore Logan Henry (132), senior Aidan Robinson (144) and senior Brecon Klugman (175) also won a match.

In its three victories, Louisburg defeated Blue Valley Southwest (56-23), Gardner Edgerton (60-24) and Anderson County (45-36). The Wildcats also suffered close losses to Atchison County (48-34) and Fort Scott (39-38).

Against Fort Scott, the Wildcats needed a pin from Elijah Eslinger in the final match to get the win. However, Fort Scott heavyweight Jaden Garcia kept fighting off Eslinger and he was only able to get the 11-1 major decision.

“He fought and fought, but that Fort Scott heavyweight was stubborn as can be,” Bovaird said. “Elijah couldn’t quite get the pin, but he came away with a solid 11-1 major decision. That dual came down to bonus points – Fort Scott scored more bonus points than we did. It’s a tough lesson to learn, but one match can make the difference. If we give up fewer pins and we earn more, then that affects the team score.”

The Wildcats will try and improve its dual record Friday when it hosts the December Duals for its home opener. Louisburg will square off with Baldwin, Burlington, Concordia, Independence and Prairie View. Matches are set to begin at 4 p.m.

Wildcat wrestling ready to build on last season's historic finish



Louisburg seniors Kaven Bartlett (pictured) and Elijah Eslinger return to lead the Wildcat wrestling team this season after both earned state medals a year ago.

The Louisburg wrestling team had an historic finish to its season last year.

For the first time in school history, the Wildcats finished with three state medalists. The good news for Louisburg, two of them are back for another run at a state title.

Seniors Kaven Bartlett (138 pounds) and Elijah Eslinger (285) return to lead the Wildcats for the 2022-23 season. The two seniors are a part of a 10-member senior class on a team that currently has 40 wrestlers.

Throw in the fact that the wrestlers have a new practice room to work out in, and they are excited for what this season has in store.

“Practices are great,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “We are loving the new wrestling room, and the guys have been working their tails off already. We started off with 45 kids and are down to 40 so far, but I love the wrestlers’ attitudes.”

Bartlett and Eslinger both finished sixth in the state after both made the state semifinals. Eslinger is currently ranked No. 5 in the preseason 4A rankings, while Bartlett is No. 6.



Louisburg senior Elijah Eslinger is currently ranked No. 5 in the Class 4A 285-pound division.

“Both guys have put in a lot of time in the offseason,” Bovaird said. “Kaven and Elijah both had strong finishes to their junior seasons, and the great thing is that they’ve been motivated to improve all throughout the offseason. They both want to wrestle in college and I love the examples they’re setting for the program.”

The Wildcats also return another state qualifier to lead the group in Ashton Moore. The Louisburg sophomore made it to the state tournament as a freshman, but will have to wait a little longer to get on the mat.

Moore is currently out with an injury he sustained during the football season, but Bovaird hopes to have him back after the new year.

“Sitting out is eating away at Ashton, you can tell,” Bovaird said. “Once he gets the all-clear to get back on the mat, he’s going to be a voracious competitor. He’ll need to overcome the obstacle of lost mat time, but with that kid’s work ethic and competitive nature, combined with his strength and athleticism, it’ll be a great season for him.”



Louisburg sophomore Ashton Moore was a state qualifier as a freshman last season.

Louisburg will have a mix of veterans and newcomers as it begins its journey for the 22-23 season.

Junior J'lee Collins (126 pounds), sophomore Mika McKitrick (132), senior Jesse Murphy (150), sophomore Jay McCaskill (157), sophomore Brayden Yoder (190), senior Trace Eslinger (190/215) and senior Kyle Oram (215) return with at least some varsity experience from a year ago.

The Wildcats will also lean on newcomers Will Showalter (106), freshman Hayden Heffernon (113), freshman Keegan Rogers (120), sophomore Logan Henry (126), senior Aidan Robinson (144), freshman Vance Hahn (165) and senior Brecon Klugman (175) as they will compete for time on the varsity level.

"We'll have some new faces on the mat this season, along with some veterans," Bovaird said. "Will Showalter is a strong athlete and he's finally filling his weight at 106. J'Lee Collins, Mika McKitrick and Logan Henry are going to be battling for spots at 126-132 early on. Jesse Murphy will be a solid guy at 144 or 150. A couple of sophomores in the higher weights are also going to make some waves in Jay McCaskill at

157 and Brayden Yoder at 190. Also, I've got two seniors at 215 with Trace Eslinger and Kyle Oram."

The Wildcats have high expectations for themselves this season, but Bovaird knows it is all about having the right frame of mind.

"One of our biggest focuses this year will be on our mindset," Bovaird said. "The season motto is 'It's a Psychological Thing,' from the legendary Dan Gable. Gable once said, 'It's a psychological thing. They fear it, but they know they can do it.' This season, we've got lots of experienced kids, but we want to be sure that we peak in February when we're supposed to peak, and we're going to work on overcoming all the psychological obstacles we possibly can.

Louisburg opens its season this Friday as it travels to the Fort Scott Dual Tournament. Matches are set to begin at 3 p.m.