

Four Wildcat wrestlers have season come to a close



Louisburg senior Ryan Owens finished one win shy of making it to state Saturday during the Class 4A sub-state tournament in Chanute. Owens ended his Wildcat career with a state medal and his season with a 25-8 record.

CHANUTE – As happy as Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird was to watch two of his wrestlers, Cade Holtzen and Alec Younggren qualify for state, he was just as heartbroken for the four that saw their season come to an end.

Senior Ryan Owens, junior Aiden Barker and sophomores Kaven Bartlett and Elijah Eslinger all finished outside of the top four Saturday during the Class 4A sub-state tournament at Chanute High School. It ended the season of all four wrestlers, but Bovaird couldn't have been more proud of his team.

“I consider the other four guys to be state qualifiers,” he said. “Had this season been like any normal season, they would have been in the top 16 at the state tournament. Making it to “state” this year is just like being in the blood round any other year. Cade and Alec only have to win one match and they're state medalists. I'm so proud of the guys who made it to sub-state.”

Owens, who medaled at state last season at 120 pounds, fell one win short of reaching the final eight this season.

The Louisburg senior lost his opening round match to Fort Scott's Shawn Barrager, but bounced back to beat Perry-Lecompton's Mason Bahnmaier by a 12-4 major decision.

Unfortunately, it would be his only win of the day as he fell in a 14-4 major decision to Independence's Kohen Wright in the blood round. He then went on to lose his fifth place to Barrager.

Owens finished his season with a 25-8 record after the sixth place finish in the sub-state tournament.

"Ryan's senior season definitely didn't end how we all wanted it to end, and this is one of the toughest parts of coaching this sport," Bovaird said. "He's given so much to the program these past four years, and he made a huge impact on his teammates. Whether it was demonstrating focus and toughness on the mat or mentoring younger guys, I'm so proud of him. My heart breaks for him, and he's been a great leader for us."



Aiden Barker puts Topeka Hayden's Will Devader on his back during his blood round match Saturday in Chanute. Barker was one win shy of making it to state.

Barker was also win victory away from punching his ticket to state at 182 pounds. He reached the semifinals by pinning Osawatomie's Seth Carrow in the first period of the quarterfinal round.

He then faced Chanute's Brayden Dillow, the eventual sub-state champion, and was pinned in the second period.

In a must-win match in the consolation semifinals, Barker had a rematch with Topeka-Hayden's Will Devader. The two squared off in the regional title match the week before, with Barker getting the win.

Devader got his revenge in a back-and-forth match as he outlasted Barker in a 14-10 decision and ended the Louisburg

junior's shot at state. Barker (27-10) did rebound to win his fifth place match with a pin of Carrow again.

"Aiden lost a real heart-breaker in his second-to-last match," Bovaird said. "It was against the same kid he'd beaten the week before in the regional finals, and just like last time, it was a back-and-forth match. He left it all out there, and I'm really proud of how he bounced back to win his final match for 5th place. Most kids would have just thrown their hands up and said 'who cares?' Aiden stepped out there, overcame the strong emotions after losing the previous match, and finished his season with a win."



Louisburg sophomore Kaven Bartlett lost a pair of 1-0 decisions Saturday at the Class 4A sub-state tournament.

As for Bartlett (126 pounds) and Eslinger (285), both finished with 0-2 records after competing in two difficult weight classes.

Bartlett (21-15) battled in both of his matches as he fell in a 1-0 decision to Independence's Cooper Anderson in the quarterfinals. Then in his first consolation match, lost by another 1-0 decision to Iola's TJ Taylor.

Eslinger (18-16) was pinned in the second round in both of his matches by Coffeyville's Brady White, the eventual champion, and Holton's Dustin Chermok.



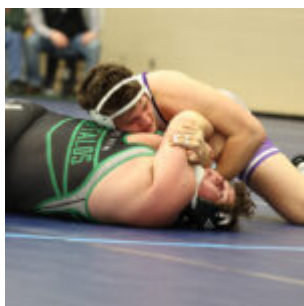
Sophomore heavyweight Elijah Eslinger finished his sub-state 0-2, but ended the season with a winning record.

"Kaven went 0-2, but you've got to consider how tough he's been wrestling," Bovaird said. "Both losses were 1-0, and that shows how close he was. Just think how many opportunities that could have gone his way to make the score 2-1, 3-1, or 1-1 even. He's been dedicated all season, and he wrestled his heart out at Sub-State.

"Elijah has really made huge strides this year, and I'm so excited for his future. He's really figured a lot of things

out, and with gained confidence and experience on the mat, he's got two solid seasons ahead of him. He's really getting strong on his feet and on top, which require skills that will definitely pay off not only in wrestling, but also football."

Younggren pins down state berth in convincing fashion



Louisburg senior Alec Younggren gets a pin of Prairie View's Noah Nordgren on Saturday during the Class 4A sub-state tournament.

CHANUTE – Alec Younggren has struggled more to break a sweat this season than he has to beat his opponents.

It was much of the same Saturday during the Class 4A sub-state tournament in Chanute. Younggren spent a total of about four minutes in his three matches combined on his way to another title.

Younggren won the 220-pound sub-state championship in convincing fashion with three pins and kept his perfect season intact.

"Since my sophomore and junior year, I have always been gunning for a state title and to be where I am means so much to me and it has been an amazing experience for me," Younggren

said. "Being at a new school, coming to new places and seeing different opponents, it just means so much to be able to get this point in my senior year."

The Louisburg senior transferred to the school from Olathe South, where he finished third at state in Class 6A last year. Since his last loss in the 6A semifinals, Younggren has won 37 straight matches, including a 35-0 record this season.

Younggren has been as dominant as any wrestler in the state and it showed Saturday.

He opened the tournament with a pin of Prairie View's Noah Nordgren in 52 seconds and then pinned Topeka-Hayden's Clayton Stephenson in 57 seconds.

In a rarity, Younggren had to go to the second period in the championship match, but pinned Holton's Dalton Roush in 2 minutes and 26 seconds.

"He didn't really make me mad till the second period, so I had to get after him a little bit," Younggren said. "I felt I wrestled pretty good. I feel like I can get better every day and every time I step on the mat I need to improve somehow. I feel amazing right now and I can't wait for state."

Getting past the first period has been a rarity for Younggren. The Louisburg senior has 23 pins on the season, and only five of his matches have gone past the second period.



Alec Younggren takes Topeka-Hayden's Clayton Stephenson to the mat Saturday during the semifinals of the Class 4A sub-state in Chanute. Younggren pinned Stephenson in 57 seconds.

Only one of his 35 wins have gone the distance, which was a 12-1 major decision against a Shawnee Heights wrestler back in December.

The one setback with all of the early wins has been trying to stay in wrestling shape as he hasn't logged many minutes on the season. So Younggren has been doing different things to stay in shape.

"You have to push yourself inside and outside of practice," Younggren said. "You have to find different ways to build your endurance, even if it is not on the mat. Whether it is running or working out more, I just have to get better any way I can."

Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird has seen his hard work first

hand and he knows Younggren has been a great fit with the Wildcat team.

“He’s been a great leader in the practice room,” Bovaird said. “There’s always something about him that rubs off on his teammates. He’s excited for the postseason, not because he’s ready for it to be over, but because he’s itching to get after his own goals. He puts himself through extra workouts all the time, and he helps coach his teammates whenever he gets the chance.

Even though it is Younggren’s first season with the program, he has fit right in with the Wildcat team. He already knew Ryan Owens and Cade Holtzen from kids wrestling, which made the transition pretty seamless.

Holtzen will join Younggren at the state tournament this Saturday in Salina. Holtzen also won a sub-state title at 132 pounds.

“It is awesome,” Younggren said. “When I first got here I really didn’t know a whole lot of people and (Cade) was one of the first one to talk to me and helped me get to know some other people. It really means a lot that I can spend my senior year and have Cade go to state with me. I feel really welcome here in Louisburg.”

Holtzen earns state bid, breaks school record in the

process



Louisburg senior Cade Holtzen tries to keep Fort Scott's Coby Burchett on the mat Saturday during the Class 4A sub-state championship match in Chanute.

CHANUTE – After his freshman year, Cade Holtzen set some big goals for himself.

However, at the time, it might have seemed a little out of reach. Holtzen garnered 45 wins his freshman year, which is still the school record for most wins in a season and gave him a head start of possibly getting the school record for career wins.

It was going to be a difficult chore as Austin Hood, a 3-time state champion, set the record with 150 wins in 2012. Still, Holtzen has always had his eye on the prize.

“We had a lot of matches that year and I was put in a situation where I was able to get a lot of wins,” Holtzen said. “I have always had lofty goals and this was one of them.”

Holtzen rewrote the record books Saturday at the Class 4A sub-state tournament in Chanute. Going into the tournament, he was sitting at 149 wins, but the Louisburg senior won the 132-pound sub-state crown with a 3-0 record, which put him at 152 wins in his career.

It was an emotional day for Holtzen as he achieved milestones in each of his three matches.

Holtzen recorded win No. 150 to tie the record with a first period pin of Frontenac's Peyton Wilderman. In his next match, Holtzen officially qualified for state in his semifinal match as he defeated Tonganoxie's Noah Bailey in a 5-2 decision and also broke the school record at the same time.



"It was a really good day and I am really excited about everything that happened," Holtzen said. "I was hoping to get it a little earlier, but to finally get the record made it a spectacular day. It is really awesome. Just want to thank my team, coaches and my parents for supporting me throughout this whole journey. Without them I wouldn't be winning sub-state

and breaking school records.”

Then came the sub-state title as Holtzen, who is currently ranked No. 3 in the state, outlasted No. 4 Coby Burchett from Fort Scott in a 4-1 decision.

“He is a tough kid,” Holtzen said of Burchett. “He was looking for some throws and that was something different that I haven’t had to deal with. I had to wrestle in better positions and a little more cautions from other positions in neutral. I feel like I could have wrestled better toward the end. I gave up a couple silly stalling calls there, but I feel I wrestled pretty good overall.”

It was the third title in as many weeks for Holtzen as he won district and regional championships the two weeks before. He now has a 35-1 record and is one of eight wrestlers remaining in the state.

“This is a big deal for me,” he said. “I said last year after my last match that my goal was to win a state title so that is what I am gunning for. Winning the sub-state title gets me that much closer to my goal. It will be tough at state and any of those guys can win it on any given day. It is a tough bracket, but I am looking forward to it.”

Holtzen has been a staple of winning for the Louisburg program as has earned two state medals in his three years and is looking for a third this Saturday at the state tournament in Salina.



Cade Holtzen takes down Tonganoxie's Noah Bailey in the 132-pound semifinals Saturday in Chanute.

“Cade has been a consistent force for our program for the past four years, and I was so excited when I realized that he’d be within grasp of breaking the school record this year,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “With all the uncertainty of Covid-19 this year, I was worried that Cade (and others) wouldn’t have the chance to reach his full potential this season. He’s been more focused and dedicated than I’ve ever seen him, and over the last four years, he’s very rarely lacked focus and dedication to any extent. He’s set a lofty goal for himself, and I think he’s within reach of attaining that goal.”

That other goal – winning a state title.

Holtzen will open the tournament against Pratt’s Kaiser Pelland, who he beat in the blood round at the state tournament last year. If he wins, he could meet Mulvane’s Chadwick Stahl, who is a 2-time state runner-up.

No matter who he faces, Holtzen is going to leave it all out on the mat in his final go-round.

“You can always get better, but mentally I feel like I am stronger than anyone in the state,” Holtzen said. “If it ever comes down to a close match, I am just going to gut it out more than they can.”

Six Wildcats move on to sub-state wrestling



Louisburg senior Cade Holtzen locks up an opponent for some back points during a 132-pound match Friday during the Class 4A regional tournament at Jefferson West.

MERIDEN – Although wrestlers still have another tournament to go to get to the state tournament in this revised version of the postseason, those moving on from last Friday’s regional tournament is equivalent to qualifying for state in pre-Covid times.

So when Louisburg saw six wrestlers finish in the top four of the Class 4A regional at Jefferson West, the Wildcats were more than pleased with what they accomplished.

Seniors Cade Holtzen (132 pounds), Alec Younggren (220) and junior Aiden Barker (182) each won regional titles. Senior

Ryan Owens was second (120), while sophomores Kaven Bartlett (126) and Elijah Eslinger (285) took third and fourth, respectively.

As a team, Louisburg finished strong as it took fourth with 119 points. Tonganoxie won the regional title with 225 points.

“It was great to get those six qualified for sub-state,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “To me, it shows that we have a solid core of tournament wrestlers. Those are typically our key point-scorers in duals. Moving 6 of the 7 to the next qualifier and finishing in fourth place was a great showing for us.

“Cade, Ryan, and Alec performed excellently, and it was a great thing for Kaven and Aiden to get redemption from last year. Both lost in the blood round at regionals in very close matches, and those losses have fueled them both. Elijah making it through is also a great thing. He’s really turned the corner this year.”

Younggren continued his perfect season Friday as his three wins moved him to 32–0 on the year. The Louisburg senior has done it in impressive fashion and his regional title match was a special one.

Younggren squared off with Baldwin’s Toby Thomas, who is ranked No. 3 in the state at 220 pounds and pinned him in just 50 seconds. In fact, all three of his wins came by pin in under a minute.

It was also career win No. 100 for Younggren as the No. 2 ranked wrestler in 4A continues his quest for a state title.



Alec Younggren takes down his Ottawa opponent Friday during the Class 4A regional tournament.

Holtzen also has high state goals as he improved his record to 32-1 on the season, including a 6-2 decision over Ottawa's Liam Sutton in the regional finals. The Louisburg senior is also ranked No. 2 in the state.

"Cade is really showing his motivation for that state championship," Bovaird said. "He's aggressive and driven, and he's not letting himself be complacent with his performances. Alec is just running through his brackets right now."

Barker continued his postseason success as he was his first two matches by pin, including a third period pin over Jefferson West's Keaton Shelman in the semifinals. Barker then faced off with Topeka Hayden's Will Devader.

The Louisburg junior found himself down early, but put Devader

on his back in the second period, but couldn't get the pin due to a blood issue with Devader. Barker didn't let that stop him as he put Devader on his back again to record the 14-8 decision and capture a regional crown.



Aiden Barker works for a pin during his 182-pound championship match Friday at Jefferson West.

“Aiden has made a statement lately with his matches,” Bovaird said. “He’s gotten multiple wins over a returning state qualifier from Ottawa, a pin over a solid kid from Jeff West, and wins over two seniors in the last two tournaments (a state-ranked wrestler from Bishop Miego and a tough kid from Hayden).”

At 120 pounds, Owens recorded a pair of technical falls to reach the championship match, where he met Holton’ Jake Barnes – who had just one loss coming into the tournament.



Ryan Owens finished as a regional runner-up at 120-pounds after a pair of technical falls.

Barnes showed why he was ranked No. 5 in the state as he prevented Owens from scoring. Owens eventually fell in a hard-fought 4-1 decision.

“Ryan is wrestling strong lately, scoring lots of points and coming close to the school record for career technical falls,” Bovaird said. “He battled to a 4-1 loss against a 3-time state placer from Holton in the regional finals.”

Bartlett had a tough road at 126 pounds as he fell to the defending state champion in the semifinals, but the Louisburg sophomore battled Holton’s Kayden Elliott to a 5-1 decision to secure a spot at sub-state and then held on for a 2-1 win over Eudora’s Mac Douglass in the third-place match.



Sophomore Kaven Bartlett pins his Atchison opponent Friday on his way to a third place regional finish.

Eslinger, the sophomore heavyweight, also showed improvement. After opening the tournament with a forfeit, he fell to No. 1 seed Hayden Robb in the semifinals, before bouncing back with a pin of Tonganoxie's Cooper Jones to secure a spot in sub-state. Eslinger was later pinned in the third place match.

"Kaven, now that he's at a more natural weight, is wrestling with focus and determination," Bovaird said. "He gives each match everything he's got. Elijah is finally figuring things out – after spending last year as a 220-pound freshman wrestling 285, he's now got confidence, strength, experience, and a new-found sense of aggression."

Each of those wrestlers are among the final 16 in their weight class and would have been a part of those traditional 16-wrestler state brackets in year's past.



Sophomore heavyweight Elijah Eslinger pulls his opponent back onto the mat Friday during the regional tournament.

The Wildcats will travel to Chanute on Saturday for the sub-state tournament as they top four in each class will advance to Salina next week for the state tournament.

“Making it through sub-state this year will be like battling through to the ‘blood round’ of state any other year,” Bovaird said. “By placing in the top-4 at sub-state, a wrestler has earned his way to the final 8 in the state. KSHSAA is medaling the top 6 wrestlers at state, which means two guys go home empty-handed. It’ll be a tough road, that’s for sure.”

Still as tough as the road will be, the Wildcats are making the most out of every moment.

“It’s a marathon from the start of the qualifying series to the top of the podium,” Bovaird said. “What used to be a two-week process is now nearly a month-long deal, and there are lots of unknowns that will impact the results. One thing is

for sure – our Cats are ready to take care of business.

“Guys are asking for more mat time, they’re wanting to do morning workouts, and they’re pushing themselves at practice without me having to light any fires. At the end of the day Saturday, our guys will have given it everything they’ve got, and win or lose, they will have represented the Wildcat Wrestling program, our school, and the community very well.”

120

Ryan Owens (24-5) placed 2nd and scored 19.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Ryan Owens (Louisburg) 24-5 won by tech fall over Presley Herrig (Tonganoxie) 3-13 (TF-1.5 1:33 (16-0))
- Semifinal – Ryan Owens (Louisburg) 24-5 won by tech fall over Archer Willis (Atchison) 20-5 (TF-1.5 4:00 (16-0))
- 1st Place Match – Jake Barnes (Holton) 23-1 won by decision over Ryan Owens (Louisburg) 24-5 (Dec 4-1)

126

Kaven Bartlett (21-13) placed 3rd and scored 14.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 21-13 won by fall over John Collins (Atchison) 7-13 (Fall 1:14)
- Semifinal – Grayson Sonntag (Tonganoxie) 20-0 won by fall over Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 21-13 (Fall 0:33)
- Cons. Semi – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 21-13 won by decision over Kayden Elliott (Holton) 11-9 (Dec 5-1)
- 3rd Place Match – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 21-13 won by decision over Mac Douglas (Eudora) 8-7 (Dec 2-1)

132

Cade Holtzen (32-1) placed 1st and scored 22.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) 32-1 received a bye () (Bye)

- Semifinal – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) 32-1 won by fall over Slater Skaggs (Holton) 17-8 (Fall 4:00)
- 1st Place Match – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) 32-1 won by decision over Liam Sutton (Ottawa) 21-10 (Dec 6-2)

182

Aiden Barker (25-8) placed 1st and scored 24.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) 25-8 won by fall over Tyler Phillips (Holton) 5-11 (Fall 1:35)
- Semifinal – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) 25-8 won by fall over Keaton Shelman (Meriden-Jefferson West) 22-7 (Fall 5:37)
- 1st Place Match – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) 25-8 won by decision over Will Devader (Topeka-Hayden) 19-5 (Dec 14-8)

195

Trace Eslinger (3-7) place is unknown and scored 0.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Konnor Tannahill (Holton) 24-1 won by fall over Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 3-7 (Fall 0:49)
- Cons. Round 1 – Aaron Hicks (Eudora) 12-17 won by fall over Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 3-7 (Fall 4:01)

220

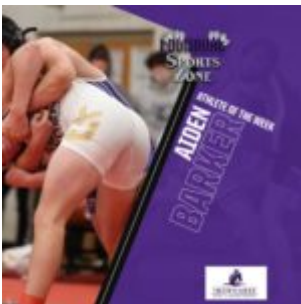
Alec Younggren (32-0) placed 1st and scored 26.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) 32-0 won by fall over Ryan Oesterreich (Meriden-Jefferson West) 12-19 (Fall 0:45)
- Semifinal – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) 32-0 won by fall over Cooper Stone (Ottawa) 2-4 (Fall 0:28)
- 1st Place Match – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) 32-0 won by fall over Toby Thomas (Baldwin) 21-4 (Fall 0:50)

Elijah Eslinger (18-14) placed 4th and scored 14.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 18-14 won by forfeit over Nathan Blakely (Atchison) 26-4 (For.)
 - Semifinal – Hayden Robb (Perry-Lecompton) 14-0 won by fall over Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 18-14 (Fall 0:42)
 - Cons. Semi – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 18-14 won by fall over Cooper Jones (Tonganoxie) 8-16 (Fall 2:21)
 - 3rd Place Match – Aaron Clevenger (Ottawa) 22-10 won by fall over Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 18-14 (Fall 1:31)
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Week 9 Athlete of the Week: Aiden Barker



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

Aiden Barker, Junior, Wrestling

Louisburg junior Aiden Barker had a career day Friday for the Wildcat wrestling program. Barker, who wrestles at 182 pounds, won the Class 4A regional title with a 3-0 record and earned a

spot in the final 16 for the first time. He recorded two pins and then defeated Topeka-Hayden's Will Devader by a 14-8 decision in the championship match.

Barker seems to be wrestling his best at the right time as he has posted a 25-8 record on the season to go along with 18 pins. Barker and the five other Louisburg sub-state qualifiers helped the Wildcats to a fourth place finish in the team standings at the Jefferson West regional.

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: Jordan Mynsted

Week 2: Julian Margrave

Week 3: Alec Younggren

Week 4: Megan Foote

Week 5: Madilyn Melton

Week 6: Michael Seufferling

Week 7: Cade Holtzen

Week 8: Ryan Owens

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Wildcats qualify seven for regional tournament



Junior Aiden Barker works for a pin during Saturday's district tournament at Santa Fe Trail High School. Barker won the 182-pound weight class.

CARBONDALE – It was the beginning of a different postseason for the Louisburg wrestling team Saturday at Santa Fe Trail High School.

In fact, it was a first for all the teams at the Class 4A District Tournament. This postseason was going to be much different than anything they have seen.

The district tournament was just the first of three steps before a wrestler has the opportunity to reach the state level. The top four in each weight class had the opportunity

to advance and the Wildcats saw seven move on to the regional round.

Louisburg put six wrestlers in the district finals, and one in the consolation finals, as the Wildcats went on to finish fourth with 165 points. Ottawa won the district crown with 249.

“I’m very proud of how those seven did this weekend, and I’m very happy with our performance,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Of course, there were five who didn’t move on, and I’m just as proud of them as the others. This was our first traditional double-elimination bracket of the season, and even though they’ve all wrestled in this type of competition before, our season has largely been focused on the mentality of having as strong a dual team as possible.

“I think that’s definitely helped our competitive mindset – in duals, we try to score more bonus points by winning with pins, techs, and majors, and we also try to avoid giving up those things. In a tournament format, the team scoring is different, but the guys all battled in every match.”

Ryan Owens (120 pounds), Cade Holtzen (132 pounds), Aiden Barker (182) and Alec Younggren (220) each captured the district title. Kaven Bartlett (126) and Elijah Eslinger (285) also made the finals, but finished second.

Sophomore Trace Eslinger (195) also advanced to regionals after he finished fourth.



Senior Ryan Owens gets some back points during his 120-pound semifinal match Saturday.

For Owens, Holtzen and Younggren – it was business as usual for the three Wildcats seniors. The three, who won state medals a year ago, moved on without a problem.

Owens, opened the tournament with a pair of technical falls, and then outlasted Baldwin's Nakos Benton in a 12-8 decision in the championship.

As for Holtzen, the No. 2 wrestler in the state, he recorded a pair of pins – including one of Ottawa's Liam Sutton in the championship – to win the 132 pound crown.

Younggren was just as dominant as the No. 2-ranked wrestler at 220 pounds had two first period pins to move his record to 29-0 on the season.



Cade Holtzen works for a pin Saturday during a match in the district tournament at Santa Fe Trail.

“Cade and Ryan have had some tight matches this season, which is great for preparing them for the postseason,” Bovaird said. “It’s out of our control, but Alec really hasn’t seen a true test. Only one match has gone all three periods and we haven’t been able to get him matches against other ranked kids. The three of them are looking pretty solid. We’ve tried to adapt our season periodization so that they’re peaking at the right time, and I think we’re doing some things right in that aspect.”

Barker’s journey to a district title was more difficult as he had to go through a returning state qualifier and a state-ranked wrestler.

In the semifinals, Barker caught Ottawa’s Wyatt Sink on his back in the third period in a hard fought match to advance to

championship, where he faced off with No. 6 ranked Angel Franco from Bishop Miege.

Barker and Franco's match went the distance as he outlasted Franco for a 9-8 decision, in what was a back and forth match.

"Two great things happened with Aiden on Saturday," Bovaird said. "One, he was able to get a second win over a returning state qualifier from Ottawa and two, he was able to get a win in the finals over a state-ranked wrestler from Bishop Miege.

"After both of those matches, I told him that he's causing my blood pressure to soar with some of the mistakes he's making, but at the same time he's aggressive, relentless, and confident. We can work to refine the technique errors, but those mindset strengths are things we can't really teach. A kid has to develop them them and apply them himself."

Bartlett and Elijah Eslinger both had competitive matches in the finals, but Bartlett came up short in a 5-1 decision to Ottawa's Parker Guge and Eslinger went on to get pinned by Ottawa's Aaron Clevinger. Earlier in the day, Bartlett won his first two matches by pin in the first period and Eslinger won his semifinal match by pin.

Trace Eslinger, who filled in at 195 pounds due to injury, also had a good day as he won a 5-3 decision in his first match, before falling 3-2 in the third place match to Baldwin's Zayne Nowak.



Alec Younggren gets a pin Saturday in the district championship to improve his record to 29-0 on the season.

“Kaven is hitting his stride very well right now,” Bovaird said. “Since moving down to 126, he’s been able to win a lot of great matches. The kid he lost to in the finals had pinned him earlier in the season, but at districts it was a lot closer – even closer than the 5-1 score suggests. He’s in a great position for moving into the next round after regionals.

“Elijah got a revenge win against in the semifinals by pinning his Baldwin opponent, and then he looked very competitive against his Ottawa opponent in the finals. Trace Eslinger stepped up and filled in at 195 this weekend after Johnathan Keegan-Childs was unable to be cleared to wrestle. He’d hurt his shoulder against Eudora a week ago. Trace got a key win in the first round and then found himself battling in a close match for 3rd place. The remarkable thing is that he normally weighs about 175 pounds.”

Five Wildcats saw their season come to an end as Noah Cotter (106), Traden Noll (138), Jarrett Hoyle (145), Jesse Murphy (152) and Jacob Briley (170) each finished outside the top four.

“Our guys who didn’t make it to the next tournament definitely went out fighting, especially Noah and Jarrett,” Bovaird said. “Noah nearly won his last match for 5th place, but dropped an 8-6 overtime decision to his Eudora opponent. Jarrett won his final match for 5th place by getting a pin. Although his season is over, it’s a great way to end things. A lot of tears were shed, especially by our seniors Hoyle and Jacob Briley.”



Sophomore Trace Eslinger finished fourth at 195 pounds and advanced to regionals.

Louisburg will look to continue its success this Friday when it travels to the Class 4A regional at Jefferson West High School. Matches are set to begin at 3 p.m., and the top four advance to next week's sub-state tournament in Chanute.

"It's going to be a dogfight, that's for sure," Bovaird said. "All seven of our guys have shots at moving on, but nothing is ever guaranteed."

106

Noah Cotter (12-18) placed 6th and scored 3.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Graham Hawks (Shawnee Mission-Bishop Miege) 17-20 won by fall over Noah Cotter (Louisburg) 12-18 (Fall 1:46)
- Cons. Round 1 – Noah Cotter (Louisburg) 12-18 received a bye () (Bye)
- Cons. Semi – Ayedin Johnson (Baldwin) 21-11 won by fall over Noah Cotter (Louisburg) 12-18 (Fall 4:13)
- 5th Place Match – Russell Smith (Eudora) 1-18 won in sudden victory – 1 over Noah Cotter (Louisburg) 12-18 (SV-1 8-6)

120

Ryan Owens (22-4) placed 1st and scored 23.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Ryan Owens (Louisburg) 22-4 won by tech fall over Frank Cressey (Shawnee Mission-Bishop Miege) 4-21 (TF-1.5 1:49 (16-0))
- Semifinal – Ryan Owens (Louisburg) 22-4 won by tech fall over Ian Meisbach (Santa Fe Trail) 9-18 (TF-1.5 2:28 (15-0))
- 1st Place Match – Ryan Owens (Louisburg) 22-4 won by decision over Nakos Benton (Baldwin) 24-10 (Dec 12-8)

126

Kaven Bartlett (18-12) placed 2nd and scored 20.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 18-12 won by fall over Jack Baron (Baldwin) 6-23 (Fall 0:48)
- Semifinal – Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 18-12 won by fall over Trent Sleichter (Santa Fe Trail) 15-7 (Fall 0:25)
- 1st Place Match – Parker Guge (Ottawa) 14-2 won by decision over Kaven Bartlett (Louisburg) 18-12 (Dec 5-1)

132

Cade Holtzen (30-1) placed 1st and scored 24.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) 30-1 received a bye () (Bye)
- Semifinal – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) 30-1 won by fall over Cody Slavin (Santa Fe Trail) 8-8 (Fall 1:00)
- 1st Place Match – Cade Holtzen (Louisburg) 30-1 won by fall over Liam Sutton (Ottawa) 19-9 (Fall 3:11)

138

Traden Noll (9-15) placed 5th and scored 5.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Chayse Jeanneret (Santa Fe Trail) 12-12 won by decision over Traden Noll (Louisburg) 9-15 (Dec 4-2)
- Cons. Round 1 – Traden Noll (Louisburg) 9-15 received a bye () (Bye)
- Cons. Semi – Miguel Andazola (Baldwin) 23-15 won by fall over Traden Noll (Louisburg) 9-15 (Fall 0:37)
- 5th Place Match – Traden Noll (Louisburg) 9-15 received a bye () (Bye)

145

Jarrett Hoyle (11-20) placed 5th and scored 7.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Luke Greenfield (Santa Fe Trail) 16-10

won by major decision over Jarrett Hoyle (Louisburg) 11-20 (MD 14-2)

- Cons. Round 1 – Jarrett Hoyle (Louisburg) 11-20 received a bye () (Bye)
- Cons. Semi – Richard Blevins (Ottawa) 20-10 won by fall over Jarrett Hoyle (Louisburg) 11-20 (Fall 1:18)
- 5th Place Match – Jarrett Hoyle (Louisburg) 11-20 won by fall over Josue Rosas (Kansas City-Bishop Ward) 2-6 (Fall 0:53)

152

Jesse Murphy (2-22) placed 5th and scored 5.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Joel Brown (Ottawa) 23-13 won by fall over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 2-22 (Fall 1:46)
- Cons. Round 1 – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 2-22 received a bye () (Bye)
- Cons. Semi – Jaiden Michael (Baldwin) 20-16 won by tech fall over Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 2-22 (TF-1.5 2:34 (18-1))
- 5th Place Match – Jesse Murphy (Louisburg) 2-22 received a bye () (Bye)

170

Jacob Briley (8-21) placed 5th and scored 5.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Tyler Pankey (Shawnee Mission-Bishop Miego) 20-2 won by fall over Jacob Briley (Louisburg) 8-21 (Fall 0:55)
- Cons. Round 1 – Jacob Briley (Louisburg) 8-21 received a bye () (Bye)
- Cons. Semi – Dakota Whitaker (Eudora) 21-9 won by fall over Jacob Briley (Louisburg) 8-21 (Fall 1:32)
- 5th Place Match – Jacob Briley (Louisburg) 8-21 received a bye () (Bye)

182

Aiden Barker (22-8) placed 1st and scored 22.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) 22-8 received a bye () (Bye)
- Semifinal – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) 22-8 won by fall over Wyatt Sink (Ottawa) 22-7 (Fall 5:49)
- 1st Place Match – Aiden Barker (Louisburg) 22-8 won by decision over Angel Franco (Shawnee Mission-Bishop Miege) 25-8 (Dec 9-8)

195

Trace Eslinger (3-5) placed 4th and scored 9.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 3-5 won by decision over Isaiah Barnett (Kansas City-Bishop Ward) 9-13 (Dec 5-3)
- Semifinal – Jared Ferguson (Ottawa) 20-8 won by fall over Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 3-5 (Fall 1:24)
- Cons. Semi – Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 3-5 received a bye () (Bye)
- 3rd Place Match – Zayne Nowak (Baldwin) 21-15 won by decision over Trace Eslinger (Louisburg) 3-5 (Dec 3-2)

220

Alec Younggren (29-0) placed 1st and scored 24.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) 29-0 received a bye () (Bye)
- Semifinal – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) 29-0 won by fall over Cooper Stone (Ottawa) 1-1 (Fall 1:13)
- 1st Place Match – Alec Younggren (Louisburg) 29-0 won by fall over Devon Moncrief (Eudora) 7-11 (Fall 1:23)

285

Elijah Eslinger (16-12) placed 2nd and scored 18.0 team points.

- Quarterfinal – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 16-12 received a bye () (Bye)
- Semifinal – Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 16-12 won by fall over Kaden Coons (Baldwin) 15-11 (Fall 1:55)
- 1st Place Match – Aaron Clevenger (Ottawa) 19-9 won by fall over Elijah Eslinger (Louisburg) 16-12 (Fall 1:40)

Hallas advances to regional tournament

Louisburg had a representative in last Friday's girls district II tournament in Osawatomie and Bailey Hallas saw her season extend at least one more week.

Hallas took fourth in the 109-pound division last Friday in Osawatomie and moves on to the regional tournament Saturday in Burlington.

"I'm so excited about this," Bovaird said. "She has been a trooper all season, learning the sport and working to improve every week. She nearly had her last match won – leading 6-2 late in the third period, she got a little out of position with a cradle on top and got reversed to her back. She's got a great mindset and I'm excited to see how she competes this Saturday.

"There are a handful of young girl wrestlers coming up in the next few years, and Bailey and Amber Pritchett (along with the numerous girl wrestlers who came before them) have started a great foundation for our girls program."

Week 8 Athlete of the Week:

Ryan Owens



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

Ryan Owens, Senior, Wrestling

Louisburg senior Ryan Owens had a big day for the Wildcats during the Class 4A District Tournament last Saturday at Santa Fe Trail High School. Owens was one of four Wildcats to earn district titles as he went 3-0 at 120 pounds to qualify for the regional round. He recorded two technical falls and defeated Baldwin's Nakos Benton by a 12-8 decision in the championship.

Owens has had a big season for the Wildcats as the returning state medalist has a 22-4 record to go along with 10 pins and five technical falls. He is also five wins away from 100 career victories.

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: Jordan Mynsted

Week 2: Julian Margrave

Week 3: Alec Younggren

Week 4: Megan Foote

Week 5: Madilyn Melton

Week 6: Michael Seuferling

Week 7: Cade Holtzen

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LHS 2021 winter king and queen to be crowned Friday



This year's 2021 Louisburg High School winter homecoming candidates are (from left) Sydney Thornton, Alec Younggren, Olivia Barber, Luke Faulkner, Brooklyn Diederich, Dawson Barnes, Madilyn Melton and Ben Guetterman.

Homecoming week at Louisburg High School kicked off Monday and events are in full swing. With something going on every day this week, it will be a busy time for students. All of it is, of course, centered around the crowning of the 2021 winter king and queen. Eight students were selected as nominees and here are their names and profiles.

The crowning will take place on Friday during halftime of the Wildcat boys' basketball game with Ottawa. Tipoff for that game is set for approximately 7:30 p.m. Good luck to all the participants and make sure to come out on Friday to support both the Wildcat girls and boys basketball teams if you can get your hands on tickets.



Olivia Barber and Luke Faulkner

Olivia Barber

Olivia is the daughter of Adam and Angie Barber. Olivia has participated in soccer for four years, National Honor Society, Interact Club and forensics for two years and FBLA, cheerleading and FCCLA for one year. After graduation, Olivia

plans to attend the University of Kansas and major in biology.

Luke Faulkner

Luke is the son of Brad Faulkner and Cindy Faulkner. Luke has participated in track for four years, soccer and yearbook for three years, FBLA for two years, and cross country and Interact Club for one year. Following graduation, Luke plans to attend Cowley Community College and pursue his track career.



Sydney Thornton and Alec Younggren

Sydney Thornton

Sydney is the daughter of Shawn and Megan Thornton. Sydney has participated in choir and FFA for four years, been the boys basketball manager for three years, softball for two years and student council for one year. Following graduation, Sydney

plans to attend the University of Central Missouri to major in nursing and then plans to attend medical school to become an OB/GYN.

Alec Younggren

Alec is the son of Jason and Monica Younggren. Alec has participated in football for four years and wrestling for four years. Following graduation, Alec will attend Fort Hays State University on a football scholarship and major in construction management.



Madilyn Melton and Ben Guetterman

Madilyn Melton

Madilyn is the daughter of Andy and Meghan Melton. Madilyn has participated in basketball for four years, volleyball for one

year and band for one year. Following graduation, Madilyn will attend Benedictine College on a basketball scholarship with the goal of becoming a dermatologist.

Ben Guetterman

Ben is the son of Ted and Lisa Guetterman. Ben has played basketball for four years, been a member of FFA for four years and played football for two years. Ben is currently undecided on his post-high school plans.



Brooklyn Diederich and Dawson Barnes

Brooklyn Diederich

Brooklyn is the daughter of Derek and Jenny Diederich. Brooklyn has participated in basketball and softball for four years, FBLA for three years and Interact Club and FFA for one

year. Following graduation, Brooklyn will attend Neosho County Community College on a basketball scholarship and major in occupational therapy.

Dawson Barnes

Dawson is the son of Rick and Cindy Barnes. Dawson has participated in basketball for four years, been a part of the football, volleyball and soccer student section for four years, baseball for one year and cross country for one year. Following graduation, Dawson plans to attend the University of Kansas and study psychology.







Wildcat wrestlers end regular season with winning week



Louisburg sophomore Jesse Murphy gets a pin during his 152-pound match Saturday against Rock Creek at Ottawa High School.

For the Louisburg wrestling team, duals this season have been a means to an end.

With more duals on the Wildcats' schedule to the COVID-19 restrictions, they don't have as many individual matches and those duals haven't gone Louisburg's way as much as it would have liked.

The dual season came to a close for the Wildcats last Friday and Saturday, but it certainly ended on a positive note them.

Louisburg swept a pair of league duals over Eudora and Piper on Friday at Eudora High School, and then on Saturday, got another win over Rock Creek at Ottawa. In all, Louisburg went 3-2 following losses to Ottawa and Concordia on Saturday.

Louisburg ended its Frontier League dual season with a 3-5 record and were 10-14 overall.

"The fact that we're putting a lot of inexperienced kids on the varsity mat has to have been disheartening for a lot of the guys on the team, but at the same time, we're giving up fewer forfeits than in previous years," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "I think the squad is building toward a solid conclusion for the season. They're doing great mentally, and our practices have been going really well."

Louisburg opened up against Eudora to begin Friday's action and the Wildcats took the early lead on a pin from senior Ryan Owens at 120 pounds, a technical fall from sophomore Kaven Bartlett at 126 and a major decision from Cade Holtzen at 132.

Eudora's middleweights, which is the strength of their team, began to take over and the Cardinals took a 38-27 lead following the 195-pound match.

Louisburg's heavyweights came through in a big way as senior Alec Younggren (220) and sophomore Elijah Eslinger (285) both earned pins to give Louisburg the 39-38 victory.



Louisburg senior Jacob Briley gets a pin during his 170-pound match Saturday in Ottawa.

“On paper, I suppose we shouldn’t have beaten Eudora,” Bovaird said. “There were some matches that we lost, but we only lost by a major decision – like at 145 and 152. Those are two of Eudora’s stronger weights, and (Jarrett) Hoyle and (Jesse) Murphy really showed a lot of guts and toughness by fighting off their attacks.

“It comes down to the fact that the whole team earned that victory by considering “bonus points.” A loss by decision only gives the other team 3 points, but a loss by pin gives them 6. Eudora is an experienced team, and to be able to come away from there with a win is a pretty good experience.”

The Wildcats used that momentum to cruise to a 54-22 win over Piper in their next dual.

The next day, Louisburg traveled to Ottawa for a matchup with the Cyclones, Rock Creek and Concordia.

After falling to Ottawa 46-36, and to Concordia 57-21, the Wildcats ended their day with a 52-24 victory over Rock Creek.

“I love getting the chance to see new teams, especially before state,” Bovaird said. “Typically, we only get to see Concordia and Rock Creek at state, but this season, we got a glimpse of what 4A looks like in Central Kansas. There’s the factor of seeing some “fresh” competition, but it’s also a great measuring stick for what we might see as we get closer to the state championships.

“Both of those teams are tough, and we battled pretty well. A few matches against Concordia didn’t go the way I’d planned, but that’s an experienced team with a lot of kids who’ve been wrestling since they were little.”

Holtzen and Younggren each won their three matches, as did Bartlett – who is settled into his new weight at 126. Combined, Bartlett went 5-0 over those two outings.



Louisburg sophomore Kaven Bartlett went 5-0 last weekend at 126 pounds.

“Last year, Kaven nearly had 30 wins, and this year he’s had some challenges pop up in front of him,” Bovaird said. “First, he had to bump up a couple weights after his initial November weigh-in at 119. He spent much of the first part of the season wrestling at 132, winning some great matches, but also finding himself up against some heavier opponents. Now that he’s down to 126, he’s comfortable and at more of a natural weight.

“He’s weathered the storm of the season and kept a great focus on improving his wrestling skills. That’s definitely given him some more confidence, and I’m pretty proud of how he’s kept his focus through the lumps of giving up so much weight and suffering a broken nose in mid-January against Paola.”

Also on Saturday, Owens went 2-1 at 120 pounds and senior Jacob Briley (170) and Eslinger did the same. Freshman Noah

Cotter (106), senior Jarrett Hoyle (145), sophomore Jesse Murphy (152) and junior Aiden Barker (182) each had a win.

Now the Wildcats will begin their focus on the postseason and that begins at noon Saturday when they travel to Santa Fe Trail High School for the Class 4A district tournament. The top four wrestlers from each weight class will move on to regionals Feb. 12 at Jefferson West High School.

Included with the Wildcats at districts is Baldwin, Eudora, Bishop Ward, Ottawa, Santa Fe Trail and Bishop Miege.

“I’m seeing more and more consistency from our guys,” Bovaird said. “They’re starting to apply more of what we’re doing at practice, and I think it’s paying off. The changes in our schedule, which have taken away most of our Saturday competitions, may very well have been a good thing. The team is looking strong and I’m seeing very little sign of fatigue or burn-out.”

Week 7 Athlete of the Week: Cade Holtzen



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week seven of the winter sports season, sponsored by Vohs Pharmacy.

Cade Holtzen, Senior, Wrestling

Louisburg senior Cade Holtzen is trying for his third state medal in four years and he is certainly off to a good start in doing that. So far this season, Holtzen, who is ranked No. 4 in Class 4A at 132 pounds, is currently 28-1 on the season to go along with 13 pins.

Holtzen also had a nice outing recently for the Wildcat program as he finished last week with a 5-0 record that featured a technical fall and a major decision as he helped Louisburg to a 3-2 dual record.

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: Jordan Mynsted

Week 2: Julian Margrave

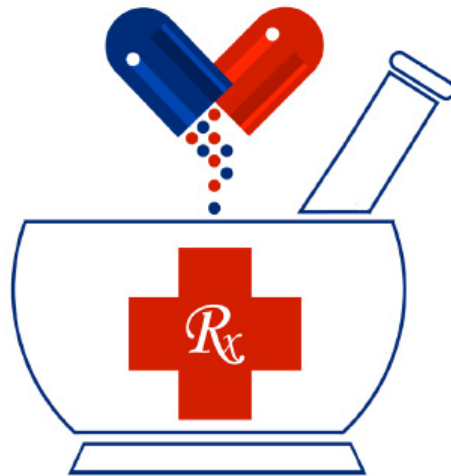
Week 3: Alec Younggren

Week 4: Megan Foote

Week 5: Madilyn Melton

Week 6: Michael Seuferling

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