

# Wildcats medal six at Baldwin Invitational



*Louisburg senior Brandon Doles works for some back points during a match Saturday at the Baldwin Invitational. Doles, who finished fourth at 182 pounds, competed in his first tournament action in almost a season-and-a-half.*

BALDWIN CITY – The Louisburg wrestling team found itself in a very competitive tournament for the second straight week.

This time the Wildcats competed in the Baldwin Invitational Tournament that featured several state-ranked wrestlers and teams. Louisburg more than held its own.

Louisburg took eighth overall with 105 points in the 16-team tournament. The Wildcats also had several find the medal stand.

Senior Aiden Barker took second at 195 pounds, while freshman Ashton Moore was third at 170. Colton Blue (113 pounds), Kaven Bartlett (126), Brayden Yoder (170) and Brandon Doles (182) each finished fourth.

“We could take the route of nothing but easy tournaments and inflate our records, but eventually we’re going to need to see these tough opponents,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “A tough schedule tests us and prepares us for the end stretch – league, regionals, and state. Last week, we talked about how an athlete needs to look at a test. A test isn’t something that is definitive; it’s an assessment of where we’re at now,

what we need to improve on, and what we're doing right."

Barker has been doing a lot right this season as he is currently the No. 4 ranked wrestler in Class 4A with a 24-5 record, with many of those losses coming against higher-ranked opponents.



***Louisburg senior Aiden Barker works for a pin Saturday at the Baldwin Invitational.***

One of those case in the championship match Saturday as Barker squared off with Wamego's Hayden Oviatt, who is currently the the No. 1 wrestler in 4A.

Oviatt pinned Barker in the first period, but had a strong day up to that point. He opened with a pain in the quarterfinals and then squared off with No. 6-ranked Jared Ferguson out of Ottawa, for the second time this week.

Barker controlled the match to take the 9-5 decision, which put him in the 195-pound finals.

"Aiden had a great tournament, but that Wamego kid is just plain unreal," Bovaird said. "He's only a junior, but at state he took 4th as a freshman at 160 and 3rd as a sophomore. Aiden will see him again at state.

"Overall, Aiden wrestled well. He opened with a solid win against a strong Goodland wrestler, and then had a rematch with Ferguson from Ottawa in the semifinals. He was in pretty good control that whole match."

Saturday also marked the first tournament action in a year-and-a-half for Doles. The Louisburg senior missed last season due to a leg injury, and a shoulder injury sideline him for the first half of this season.

After getting his first win of the season last Thursday in a dual against Ottawa, Doles responded with a fourth-place finish at 182 pounds. Both of his losses came against Burlington's Brock Zimmerman in what were close decisions.

Doles earned a pin in his first match of the day, and then followed with victories over Labette County's Austin Ourada and Osawatomie's Seth Carrow.

"Brandon has been missed on the mat this last year and a half, but he's had a great presence as a sort of assistant coach in the meantime," Bovaird said. "I loved getting to sit in his corner again this weekend. He's got some things to overcome in regards to conditioning and confidence, but that's understandable. He's gotten through the hard part of having his first tournament back, so now it's time to focus on getting in shape and knocking off the rust."

Louisburg was also able to snag a pair of medals at 170 pounds as Moore and Yoder squared off with each other on two different occasions, with Moore winning both close matches.

“One pretty neat thing was that we had two freshmen place,” Bovaird said. “Ashton Moore had to wrestle his teammate Brayden Yoder twice, winning 3-1 and 1-0 both times. Those two are really going to push each other the next three years, and I’m excited to see what sort of a power-punch they’re going to give our line-up. We’re just pretty solid in that weight range.”

Blue finished with a 3-2 record at 113 pounds as he recorded a pair of pins in the consolation bracket, before falling in a 10-4 decision to Osawatomie’s Parker Layman in the third-place match.

Bartlett also had a 3-2 record at 126 pounds as he reached the semifinals, before losing a 4-1 decision to Prairie View’s Hagen Blanck. In the consolation side, he won a 5-0 decision over Rock Creek’s Spencer Bard, then lost a tough 3-2 decision to Goodland’s Octavio Gonzalez in the third-place match.

Baldwin hosted a girls invitational tournament Friday and senior Bailey Hallas battled to take fourth overall at 109 pounds.

Hallas finished the day with a 2-3 record and recorded two pins in the process.

Louisburg will now have some time off as the Wildcats won’t compete again until Feb. 9 when they travel to Eudora for the Frontier League Invitational.

## **Ottawa edges Louisburg in dual**

Despite winning its last three matches of the night, Louisburg came up just short last Thursday in its home dual with Ottawa.

The Cyclones topped the Wildcats, 37-34, but won some close matches.

The final match of the night came down to 195 pounds when

Aiden Barker, who is ranked No. 4 at 195, defeated No. 6 ranked Jared Ferguson in a big victory.



***Louisburg junior Elijah Eslinger gets a pin against his Ottawa opponent last Thursday in a league dual at Louisburg.***

At 182 pounds, senior Brandon Doles won by decision as he wrestled in his first match back from injury and freshman Ashton Moore won by major decision at 170.

Kaven Bartlett won by decision at 126, Jay McCaskill recorded a pin a 138, Colton Blue won by pin at 113 pound and Elijah Eslinger won his heavyweight match by pin.

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# Bartlett wins 126-pound title at Husky Invitational



*Louisburg senior Kaven Bartlett went 4-0 last weekend at the Husky Invitational held at Blue Valley Northwest High School.*

OVERLAND PARK – For being a last minute addition to its schedule, the Louisburg wrestling team was more than happy to take part in the Husky Invitational last weekend.

However, maybe no one was more elated than Kaven Bartlett.

The Louisburg junior won the 126-pound title at the tournament held at Blue Valley Northwest High School. Over two days on Friday and Saturday, Bartlett proved the best in his class as he put together a 4-0 record, including a victory over a state-ranked wrestler.

Bartlett opened with a first period pin of Topeka-Seaman's Draven Bennett, then followed it up with another pin of Heritage's Diego Reyes.

He then squared off with Lawrence Free State's D'onte Goodman, who is ranked No. 5 in Class 6A, in the semifinals. Bartlett responded with a 6-1 decision and then downed Andover's Colter Rieschick by a 4-1 decision in the championship match.

"Kaven was a man on a mission at BVNW," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "In his semifinal match, he faced a Lawrence Free State wrestler who is ranked #5 in 6A, and Kaven was all about business with him. He got two takedowns and was dominant

on top. In the finals, he kept his focus and never let the spotlight of being a major tournament distract him.”

In all, the Wildcats finished 11th out of 22 teams with 153 points. Andover won the tournament with 321.5 points, while Maize was second with 299.

The Wildcats weren’t even supposed to be in the tournament as they were originally scheduled to compete in Parsons on Friday. It ended up being cancelled due to COVID-19, the Wildcats’ second cancellation in as many weeks.

Bovaird said his team was fortunate to compete in the Husky Invitational and learned a lot from their time there.

“We were the only 4A school there and we were the smallest Kansas school (aside from Jayhawk-Linn, which is 3A),” Bovaird said. “The rest of the 22-team field was filled with 5A and 6A schools, as well as two Colorado teams (JK Mullen out of Denver and Heritage out of Littleton), one Iowa team (Marion), and one Missouri team (Lincoln Prep). I loved seeing the competition there.

“The Husky Invitational had a good number of state-ranked kids and returning state medalists. When we see the same faces all season long, it gets to be monotonous. Tournaments like this one help us see new styles and new faces – especially when it’s against kids we know nothing about – and it’s a great measuring stick for where we are now versus where we want to be.



***Louisburg senior Aiden Barker finished fifth at Husky Invitational at 195 pounds.***

Bartlett wasn't the only Wildcat to earn a spot on the medal stand. Senior Aiden Barker competed in a tough 195-pound field and took fifth overall.

Barker finished 3-2 on the day and pinned Blue Valley West's Robert Svoboda in his fifth place match. Barker lost his semifinal and consolation semifinals to Matthew Marcum of Lawrence Free State (No. 2 in 6A) and Topeka Seaman's Jaxson Thomas.

Sophomore Colton Blue went on to finish seventh at 113 pounds, while freshman Ashton Moore was eighth at 170 pounds. Mika McKitrick (120) and J'Lee Collins (132) each took 10th, while Noah Cotter was 11th at 106, as was Brayden Yoder at 182.

"One of the tough things about wrestling is when you have a



kid with high hopes for a tournament and he goes out and falls short of his goals,” Bovaird said. “The trick is how to get him to refocus and bounce back – not just after making a mistake in a match or after losing a match, but the next week at practice. Wrestling can be so draining psychologically. The trick is that the coaches need to help these kids realize that a single match or tournament isn’t a defining moment in their season; it’s just a snapshot in time. We have time to fix our mistakes, and at this point in the year, we need to be making mistakes. That’s the only way we can learn and best prepare for the postseason. ‘Beat Yesterday’ is the corporate motto of Garmin, and that’s exactly what our coaching staff has been trying to get our kids to believe.

“We’re a young team, and that puts us at a disadvantage in a lot of ways. But the great things about the BVNW tournament outnumber the negatives. Aiden Barker matched up with the #2 ranked wrestler in 6A and was the only opponent that wasn’t pinned by him. Aiden bounced back and finished 5th. Mika won his first two varsity matches of the season, Colton finished 7th at 113 in a very tough bracket, J’Lee scored a ton of takedowns and is showing huge progress despite his record, and Lucas Swartz, Ashton, and Brayden continue to be competitive as freshmen in the upper weights. We’re still seeing some great things from Noah, Kyle Oram, and Elijah Eslinger as well.”

Louisburg is back in action Thursday when it hosts Ottawa in a dual format and then will take part in the Baldwin Invitational Tournament on Saturday.

## **Wildcats take down Lawrence in home dual**

Louisburg hosted Lawrence High School for a dual last Wednesday and the Wildcats came out on top 51-27.

The dual, which started at 220 pounds, was big for the Wildcats early as a pin by Noah Cotter, at 106 pounds, along with two forfeits, put Louisburg up 18-6.



***Louisburg sophomore Noah Cotter works for a pin last week at home during his 106-pound match against Lawrence.***

Mika McKitrick won by forfeit at 120 pounds, and after a Kaven Bartlett loss, J'Lee Collins won by pin to put the Wildcats up 30-9.

Despite a Jesse Murphy pin at 152 pounds, Lawrence chipped away at the Wildcat lead and cut it to 36-27 heading into the final three matches.

However, Ashton Moore and Brayden Yoder each won by forfeit and Aiden Barker ended it with a 4-1 decision.

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# Louisburg picks up dual wins over Olathe South, Labette County



***Louisburg senior Aidan Cannon went 1-1 at 145 pounds last Wednesday to help the Wildcats get victories over Olathe South and Labette County.***

OLATHE – Louisburg wrestling had to face some adversity prior to its double dual last Wednesday at Olathe South.

The Wildcats found out they were going to be open in three weight classes and had juggle their lineup around for another. It wasn't the best way to enter competition, but Louisburg still came out on top.

Louisburg opened with a 42-30 victory over Labette County and then followed it up with a close win 42-38 win over Olathe South.

"We had some unexpected obstacles pop up, which left us open at 113, 152, and 160 and scrambling at 138 (injuries, illnesses, and weight issues), but the way the team battled was pretty awesome," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "We had several kids go undefeated. We're still getting lots of great experience and learning as we go."

Sophomores Noah Cotter (106 pounds), J'Lee Collins (132), junior Kaven Bartlett (126), freshman Ashton Moore (170) and junior Elijah Eslinger (285) each won a pair of matches. Senior Bailey Hallas did the same on the girls side at 109 pounds.

Senior Aidan Cannon also made the move up from junior varsity at 145 pounds, while freshman Jay McCaskill moved down to 138. Cannon got the Wildcats a big victory over Olathe South.

Aiden Barker went 1-1 at 195 pounds and suffered just his second loss of the season. Barker, who is ranked No. 4 in Class 4A, lost to the defending 6A champion, Blake Jouret of Olathe South by technical fall.

It was a night of a lot of positives for the Wildcat program.

"Bartlett was especially focused, and I love where his mindset has been lately," Bovaird said. "Collins and Cannon both won key matches for us too. Barker had a rough second match against the defending 6A state champion, but I'm proud of how he stepped out there and battled. He never gave up against his opponent."

The double dual also provided a unique atmosphere as Olathe South set up the mat on their auditorium stage for the competition.

"I'd seen pictures of wrestling duals held in auditoriums on the stage, but those had mostly been collegiate duals," Bovaird said. "When we got to Olathe South and saw the set-up, I was pretty excited. That was a truly unique experience, and we loved it."

Louisburg is back on the mats tonight as the Wildcats host Lawrence High for a dual. It will also be Alumni Night for Louisburg. Matches are set to begin at 6 p.m.

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# Wildcat wrestlers finish runner-up at home tournament



***Louisburg freshman Brayden Yoder looks to put his opponent on his back during a 182-pound match Saturday at the Louisburg Wildcat Invitational. Yoder finished second overall and was one of five Wildcats to make it to the championship match.***

In its first action back from the holiday break, the Louisburg wrestling team had a chance to ease back into the swing of things in front of its home fans.

The Wildcats competed in the Louisburg Wildcat Invitational on Saturday and put together a strong performance in the 10-team field.

Louisburg finished second overall with 200.5 points and finished 19 points behind champion Pittsburg. Blue Valley West was third at 188.

“After the first round and part of the second round, I wasn’t sure how we were going to end up as a team,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Hosting a tournament and having a full line-up makes for a busy day, so I didn’t really think much about it. After lunch, kids kept saying we were bouncing in and out of first place and keeping neck-and-neck with Pittsburg.”



"They're a team that is made up mostly of juniors and seniors, and our team had 7 freshmen and 2 sophomores in the line-up. Several of our varsity guys are only second year wrestlers. By the end of the day, I was pretty excited to see the team battling for a plaque at our home tournament."

Louisburg had a successful day as eight wrestlers left with medals and five of them found themselves in the championship match.



***Louisburg senior Aiden Barker works for a pin at 195 pounds Saturday during the Wildcats' home tournament. Barker was first in his weight class.***

Senior Aiden Barker dominated his way to a title at 195-pounds as he recorded four pins and never had to go more than one round. He pinned Pittsburg's Jaquan Augustin in 1:38 in the championship.

“Aiden’s really stepping up,” Bovaird said. “He knows that he’s seen his last couple of seasons fall short of his goals, and I remember how hard it hit him each time. He’s a focused young man who’s taking things seriously this season. He’s giving great leadership to his teammates and setting a high bar.”

Four other Wildcats – Colton Blue (113 pounds), Kaven Bartlett (126), Brayden Yoder (182) and Elijah Eslinger (285) – also earned a spot in the championship match.

Although none of them were able to come out on top in their final match, each of them wrestled strong all day according to Bovaird.

Blue (13-4), a freshman, went 3-0 with three pins to advance to the title match, but was pinned in the second period of the championship by Blue Valley West’s Logan Meinheit despite getting out to a 4-0 lead.

As for Bartlett, the Louisburg junior won four straight matches on his way to a spot in the championship with three pins and a technical fall. He lost a close 4-3 decision to Anderson County’s AJ Schaffer in the first place match.



***Louisburg junior Kaven Bartlett finished second overall at 126 pounds Saturday.***

“Colton had a great tournament, which included a win over a Shawnee Mission East wrestler who had been ranked at one point this season,” Bovaird said. “In the finals, he got a quick takedown and back points against his opponent, who’s a pretty talented wrestler himself.

“Kaven was on a mission Saturday. Even though he didn’t win in the finals, he was fighting every second of the match. I thought he was doing what he needed to do to score points and keep his opponent on his heels. I’d hoped he would have gotten that second stalling call, which would have tied the match, but it just didn’t go his way.”

Yoder, a freshman, also had a strong home debut with a 3-1 record through pool and bracket play and led up to a matchup with Blue Valley West’s Matt Lancaster, who is undefeated on the season. Lancaster handed Yoder (11-7) his only two losses on the day.

As for Eslinger, he rolled up four straight wins to advance to the heavyweight championship, including a pair of pins. Eslinger (14-4) lost by pin in the championship to Liberal's Hudson Rice.

"Brayden weighed in at just over 170 and he was competing against a bunch of kids who were not only upperclassmen, but also weighing as much as 12 pounds more than Brayden," Bovaird said. "He had a great match in the semifinals, giving a Liberal kid his second loss of the season, and then he faced a brute senior from BV West in the finals.

"Elijah had two great wins by decision Saturday, with one of them being a revenge win over a Royal Valley wrestler from last year. I love how he's been showing that he's got the endurance and mental toughness to wrestle three full periods. That will be a huge asset down the road."

Sophomore Noah Cotter (106 pounds) and freshman Ashton Moore (170) each finished third overall, while junior Jesse Murphy (152) was fourth.

Cotter (13-6) finished the day with a 4-1 record, including a first period pin over Royal Valley's Payton Rivera in the third place match.





***Sophomore J'Lee Collins works for a pin at 132 pounds on Saturday in Louisburg.***

As for Moore (13-6), he was 3-2 with a close 3-2 decision over Leavenworth's Emory Fedd in the third place match. Murphy (8-6) was 2-3 on the day after getting pinned by Blue Valley West's Veda Gummadi in third place match.

"Noah Cotter is wrestling like he's on a mission," Bovaird said. "He was 4-1 with 4 pins Saturday, and his only loss was an overtime decision that really could have gone either way. Jesse had a great come-from-behind win in the second round of the tournament, and that win helped him get to fourth. Ashton finished in third place, but he was perhaps the most aggressive I've seen him so far this season."

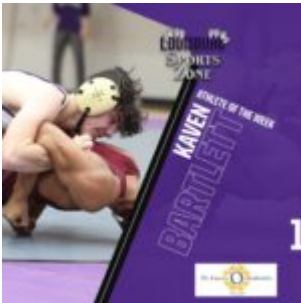
Freshman Jay McCaskill (145), sophomore J'Lee Collins (132) and freshman Lucas Swartz (160) each finished fifth overall.



Louisburg is back in action tonight at Olathe South and will face off with Labette County in dual action. The Wildcats will then travel to the Topeka Invitational on Saturday.

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## **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, JUNIOR, WRESTLING**

Louisburg junior Kaven Bartlett had another strong performance for the Wildcat wrestling team Saturday during the Louisburg Invitational. Bartlett helped the Wildcats to a second place team finish and found himself in the championship match of the 126-pound bracket.

Bartlett recorded three pins on the day, to go along with a technical fall, to advance to the first place match. Despite getting down early, the Louisburg captain rallied to make it a one-point match, but came up just short in a 4-3 loss to finish second. Bartlett currently has a 14-4 record on the season.

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: Elijah Eslinger

Week 2: Maverick Rockers

Week 3: Aiden Barker

The advertisement is a rectangular banner with a purple border. It is divided into several sections. The top left section features the logo for 'Dr. Laura's Orthodontics' with a sunburst graphic and the tagline 'We're your smile's best friend'. Below this, it states 'Whether your child needs 1 set or 2 sets of braces you never pay twice at our office'. The top right section shows a close-up of a person's smiling face with braces, with the text 'Orthodontics, TMJ and Sleep Apnea Treatment' below it. The middle section has a light blue background with the text 'Comfortable dental care for the entire family: No shots, no drills, no pain' and 'We offer sedation dentistry for high anxiety patients'. The bottom left section shows a family photo of a man, a woman, and a child, with contact information: '5321 W 151<sup>st</sup> St, Leawood, KS 66224 (913)851-9969' and '1270 W Amity, Louisburg, KS 66053 (913)837-3096'. The bottom right section features the 'IRONHORSE' logo with a horse head and the text 'FAMILY & COSMETIC DENTISTRY'. At the very bottom right, it says 'Follow us on Facebook for special contests and discounts' with a Facebook icon.

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# Top 10 Louisburg Sports Stories for 2021



It was a successful, and eventful, 2021 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 several programs brought back state hardware.

Below are the top stories from 2021, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the explanation 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 2022 will bring. Thank you to everyone for their support and can't wait for it all to begin again.



## **10. Louisburg golf team qualifies for state**

INDEPENDENCE – For the second time in as many seasons, the Louisburg boys golf team qualified for the state tournament.



Except this time, the Wildcat team is made up of a completely new roster.

The Louisburg group of Johnny Eberhart, A.J. Arriola, Johnny Thompson, Sam Wheeler, Dacey Wieland and Jackson Olson shot a 392 to finish third at the Class 4A regional meet at Independence Country Club.

The Wildcats were just three strokes behind runner-up Field Kindley. Independence won the regional title with a 361.

Louisburg last went to state in 2019, but the 2020 season was canceled due to COVID-19.

Eberhart led Louisburg with an 87 and finished fourth overall and was the lone Wildcat to make the cut for the second day.



## **9. Compliment steps back from volleyball program after 15 seasons.**

When Jessica Compliment walked off the floor following her team's semifinal sub-state loss to Bishop Miege back in October of 2020, the only thought on her mind was how that match was more like a state championship battle.s

It wasn't your normal match as the two perennial state contenders had to square off so early in the postseason. She was proud of her team and was looking forward to another season of helping Louisburg volleyball get to another state tournament.

Little did she know, it would be the last time she would find herself on the Lady Cat sideline.

In late January, Compliment submitted her resignation as head volleyball coach as she will be stepping away to spend more time with her growing family.

Compliment certainly left her mark on the Louisburg volleyball program as she finished her 15th season back in October and has an impressive resume to show for it.

In the decade-and-a-half as the Lady Cat coach, Compliment guided Louisburg to eight state tournament appearances and placed in the top four of seven of them.

She also finished nine wins shy of 400 as she posted a record of 391-226 and helped Louisburg to three state championship matches.

Shortly after, the district hired assistant coach Leanna Willer to take over the program.





## **8. Wildcat boys soccer wins Frontier League title, advances to regional title**

It had the drama of a state championship match, but instead the No. 1 and 3 ranked teams in the state were playing for the Class 4-1A regional championship title.

Louisburg hosted Bishop Miege in hopes ending the Stags' string of consecutive state championships.

Instead, the Wildcats once again saw their season come to a close after a 2-0 loss to the Stags at Wildcat Stadium and ended their season with a 12-5-1 record.

The loss was heartbreaking defeat for the Wildcats, who had

their sights set on another state final four – and possibly – a state title. To make matters worse, it was to a Miego team that has handed Louisburg a loss in five of the last six postseasons.

Earlier in the season, the Wildcats were crowned as co-champions of the Frontier League with Spring Hill.

132	WEIGHT	220
35	WINS	35
1	LOSSES	0
17	PINS	26
3	4A RANKING	2

**STATE BOUND**

CADE HOLTZEN

LOUISBURG WESTING

LOUISBURG WESTING

ALEC YOUNGGREN

LOUISBURG SPORTS ZONE

## 7. Wildcat wrestling medals two

SALINA – Cade Holtzen and Alec Younggren didn't get to leave Salina with what they were hoping to earn.

Only a select few get to leave with the title of "state champion," and both Louisburg seniors were close to reaching their goal. Despite that, both wrestlers helped the Wildcat team to their best state finish in nearly 11 years.



Younggren reached the championship match, only to finish second at 220 pounds, while Holtzen rallied back to medal third at 132 during the Class 4A Kansas State Wrestling Championships at the Tony's Pizza Events Center. The two wrestlers combined to score 30 points, which put them 14th in the team standings.

Louisburg hadn't finished that high since 2010, when Austin Hood won his first of three state titles and his brother Bryce, took second. The Wildcats were 10th that year.



## **6. Louisburg cross country qualifies both teams for state, medals four.**

WAMEGO – It wasn't the finish Louisburg wanted following the Class 4A state cross country meet, but the Wildcats left with more than their fair share of hardware.

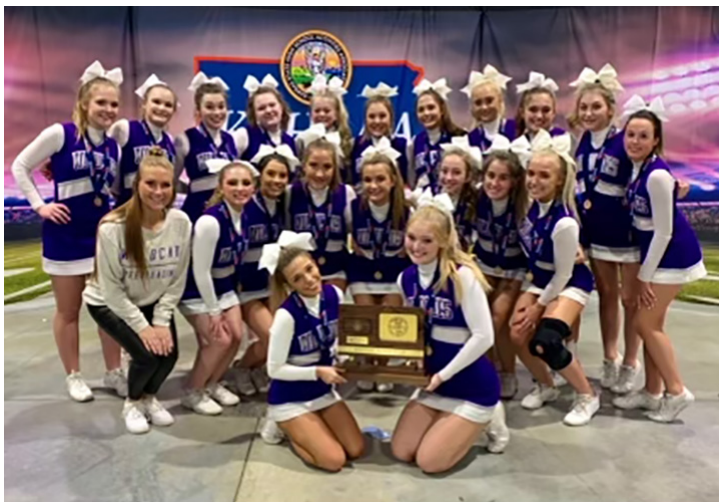
Louisburg was awarded four state medals following the meet at

Wamego Country Club, including three on the girls side for the second straight season.

The Lady Cats had hoped to earn a team plaque for the second year in a row, but took fifth overall with 144 points. Eudora won the girls championship with 56, Baldwin was second with 64 and Winfield was third with 93.

Sophomore Emma Vohs led the charge for Louisburg as she finished sixth overall. Sophomore Maddy Rhamy and senior Reese Johnson also medaled for the Lady Cats.

In his first year with the boys program, senior Jaden Vohs had a strong final run for the Wildcats as he medaled 12th overall.



## **5. Louisburg cheer finishes runner-up at state competition**

TOPEKA – The Louisburg High cheer program knows a thing or two about being one of the last teams left standing at the Game Day Showcase.

Louisburg, which won a state title in 2019 and took third in 2020, found itself one of the two teams left standing.

When the final results were announced in November, the judges



awarded the Wildcat cheer squad the state runner-up plaque. Paola won the state title, while Baldwin made it a Frontier League sweep as it took third.



## 4. Wildcat girls take fourth at state soccer

WICHITA – The Louisburg girls soccer team may have left the Class 4-1A Kansas State Girls Soccer Championships with a pair of losses, but the Wildcats took a lot of pride in what they accomplished.

For the fourth straight season, Louisburg advanced to the state final four and the Wildcats finished fourth in the state – a far cry where many people thought they would end up. The Wildcats lost a pair of 2-1 matches to Mulvane and then to McPherson in the third-place match at the Stryker Sports



Complex in Wichita.

Louisburg, which lost 12 seniors from a season that didn't happen due to COVID, returned just three varsity players. Despite all that, they ended up being one of the top teams in the state.



### **3. Louisburg girls basketball snaps 47-year state drought, takes third at state**

SALINA – The tears were abundant following Louisburg's loss to McPherson in the Class 4A state semifinal game.

The Lady Cats saw their season come to an end after their 58-46 loss to the Bullpups in Salina, but as hard as the finality of it was to take, they know what is the bigger

picture.

Before the game even started, Louisburg already wrapped up its best finish in program history and became the first Lady Cat team to place at state as it finished third.

A season that finished with a 19-5 record and a third place state trophy, is one that will always be remembered in Louisburg history.

“It means the world to me to finish third at state,” senior Megan Foote said. “Obviously it wasn’t how we wanted to finish, but that’s okay. I’m still beyond proud of this group and the accomplishments we have made. We are the best girls basketball team in Louisburg history. I’d say to be a part of that, is pretty awesome. I’m honored.”

For the last three quarters of the game, Louisburg actually outscored McPherson 43-37, but it was the first quarter that the Lady Cats weren’t able to overcome.

McPherson scored the first 15 points of the first quarter and took a 21-3 lead going into the second period.



## 2. Wildcat basketball advances to first-ever state title game, finish runner-up

SALINA – The result of the state championship game is not what the Louisburg boys basketball team will focus on several years from now.

The fact that the 2020-21 Wildcats recorded the best finish in school history, will be more than enough for them to fondly reminisce about.

Louisburg, which played in its first-ever state championship game in Salina, fell to state power Bishop Miege, 94-40. As disappointing as the result was, many of the Wildcats were looking bigger picture.

“We will forever live in history with this senior class and with this team,” senior Weston Guetterman said. “Until someone



wins it at least, we are going to be the bar that everyone looks to. It is a proud moment for all of us.”

In the state semifinal, the Wildcats got a revenge victory with a come-from-behind 58-55 win over Augusta to advance to the state title game.



## 1. Wildcat track wins second state championship; Wright wins three state titles.

WICHITA – On the 10th anniversary of the Louisburg boys’ first state track championship, this year’s team wanted to do something to commemorate the historic event.

The Wildcats decided they wanted to win one of their own.

Louisburg edged out Andale for the state championship Friday during the Class 4A Kansas Track and Field Championships at Cessna Stadium in Wichita.

It is just the second track championship for Louisburg and just the fourth team state championship in school history.

The first one was a golf title in 1977, and then football won its first state title in 2010. The track team followed with its first later that school year in 2011 and the Louisburg cheer squad won a state title in 2019.

“There are no words to describe how incredibly proud I was of the entire team,” Louisburg coach Andy Wright said. “It was a total team effort. It was a moment I will never forget as a coach, and how exciting that it came down to the final race. Everyone gave it their all, and I just couldn’t happier as a coach to see all of that hard work pay off for them with the greatest reward.”

Tom Koontz led the Wildcats with four state medals, including a state championship in the 110-meter hurdles.





On the girls side, Delaney Wright made some history of her own.

Wright was the favorite to win state titles in her three events at the Class 4A State Track and Field Championships.

She didn't disappoint.

Wright not only won three state championships, but she won them in convincing fashion, breaking two school records in the process. The Louisburg junior won the long jump, 400-meter dash and the 200-meter dash on her way to an historic day in Wichita.

"My experience at state track this year was amazing," Wright said. "The people competing there were super nice and my teammates made it more fun. It meant a lot to pull off winning three state titles."

Wright became the first female Wildcat athlete to win three state titles in the same year as she helped the Lady Cats to a fifth place finish in the team standings – also the highest finish for Louisburg girls track and field.

“I can’t say enough how awesome of a competitor Delaney is,” Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. “I know she went to state with one thing on her mind – win. She did just that and truly performed to her best. Winning three different events is an incredible feat.”

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## Wildcats take third at Tonganoxie, eight finish in the top four



***Louisburg freshman Jay McCaskill works for a pin during his 145 pound match Saturday at Tonganoxie.***

TONGANOXIE – Louisburg wrestling coach Bobby Bovaird couldn’t have asked for a much better way for his team to end the 2021 part of its schedule.

During the Randy Starcher Invitational on Saturday in Tonganoxie, Louisburg finished third out of 10 teams with 153 points. Tonganoxie was first with 210 and Lansing was second at 167.5

The Wildcats were also well-represented in the medal department as they had eight wrestlers finish in the top four.

"We had a pretty solid conclusion to the first part of the season," Bovaird said. "At Friday's practice, it was weird – we had the whole gym to ourselves. Basketball had practiced earlier in the day, so we were the only ones there. I went a little off-script from my original match prep practice place. We did some visualizing and breathing exercises.

"At Saturday's tournament, Tonganoxie had a classroom set aside for each school to store their bags and to have a place to decompress or get away from the craziness of the tournament. It was perfect timing to get the team to try some visualizing on their own. I think it definitely paid off. All of our guys were pretty focused and competitive."

Louisburg senior Aiden Barker had one of the more dominant performances of the tournament. Barker finished first at 195 pounds with a 5-0 record and won all of them by pin.

All of those pins were in the first period, except for the championship match against Lansing's Andrew Shields, in which Barker got the pin 20 seconds in the second period.

"Aiden has that senior confidence that I love to see," Bovaird said. "He's been driven by the past two seasons – coming so short of going to state as a sophomore and coming one match away from going to the final 8 last year. You could tell during football that he was on a mission to accomplish his goals in the fall, and you can tell the same thing now. He was dominant in all five matches."



***Louisburg senior Aiden Barker records one of his five pins Saturday at Tonganoxie. Barker won the title at 195 pounds.***

Juniors Kaven Bartlett (126 pounds) and freshman Colton Blue (113) also found themselves in the championship match.

Bartlett won his first three matches, including two by pin and an 8-4 decision over Independence's Cooper Anderson. Bartlett, who is ranked No. 5 in Class 4A, went up against No. 1 ranked Braeden Moore from Tonganoxie and lost by pin to take second.

Blue won his first four matches of the day and went up against Independence's Mason Gibbons in the championship. The Louisburg freshman fell in a 10-4 decision.

Of the top eight finishers, five of them were either freshmen or sophomores.

"This freshman class is pretty special," 'Bovaird said. "I've



been watching them grow from youth wrestling through middle school wrestling. Now that they're on the mats for high school, they're delivering on their potential and then some. It will be an amazing next four years to see their growth and accomplishments."

One of those freshmen was Jay McCaskill, who went on to take third at 145 pounds. After McCaskill lost his first match of the day, he rattled off four straight wins, including a pin in the third place match.

Sophomore Noah Cotter went 3-2 at 106 pounds, and all three came by pin to take third place.

Freshman Brayden Yoder had a big day at 182 pounds as he went 3-1, including a pin in his third place match.



***Louisburg junior Elijah Eslinger took third at 285 pounds***



### ***Saturday at Tonganoxie.***

Junior Elijah Eslinger also finished third at 285 pounds with a 3-1 record. Eslinger outlasted Tongnaoxie's Cooper Jones in a 4-3 decision in the third place match.

At 170 pounds, freshman Ashton Moore won his first three matches and took fourth overall.

"All of our guys are really coming together and making huge strides," Bovaird said. "Noah was 3-2 and finished in 3rd place. He got a revenge win from last year against his Tonganoxie opponent, and his two losses were tech falls. He just won't give up, and now that he's not giving up 15 pounds each match, he's going to see some great things this year. Colton only lost one match – a rematch against Independence. The week before, he lost by major, but this time it was much closer. Kaven got a revenge win against Independence, handing him his first loss of the season.

"Jay lost to the eventual champion in the first round, but he rattled off four pins to finish 3rd. Lucas Swartz made the drop to 152 for the weekend to fill in for Jesse Murphy. He was 1-3, but he was battling in each of his matches. Ashton and Brayden were a combined 6-3 on the weekend, with six pins."

Louisburg will look to use that momentum on Jan. 8 when the Wildcats host the Louisburg Invitational in their first action after the holiday break.

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## **Week 3 Athlete of the Week:**

# Aiden Barker



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week three of the winter sports season, sponsored by Landmark National Bank.

## AIDEN BARKER, SENIOR, WRESTLING

Louisburg senior Aiden Barker had a big week for the Wildcat wrestling team and turned out a standout performance during the Randy Starcher Invitational on Saturday in Tonganoxie. Barker won the 195-pound weight class with a 5-0 record and all five victories came by pin.

Barker is off to a good start in his final season with the Louisburg program. He is currently 13-1 on the season and is ranked No. 4 at 195 pounds in Class 4A.

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: Elijah Eslinger

Week 2: Maverick Rockers



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## Wildcats go 1-2 at December Duals in Baldwin



BALDWIN CITY – The Louisburg wrestling team traveled to Baldwin High School on Friday as the Wildcats took part in the December Duals.

Louisburg squared off with Independence, Baldwin and Gardner-Edgerton in hopes of gaining more experience on the season for a team filled with freshmen and sophomores.

The Wildcats were able to do that as they went 1-2 on the day with a 54-26 win over Gardner. Louisburg also had a pair of close setbacks with a 39-37 loss to Baldwin and fell 43-32 to

Independence.

"I think psychologically, we're in a good place," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "Wrestling is a tough season for lots of reasons, but chiefly because of the timing. These kids have to monitor their weights and work hard to get in wrestling shape really quickly, while at the same time they're juggling all of their music concerts and fall semester finals. Despite some of the lumps we took on the mat, I'm encouraged by the positivity and the resilience of the team – varsity and JV alike."

Against Independence, the Wildcats got off to a tough start as they got down 19-0 and 31-12, before they were able to make it a little closer. Louisburg got wins from Jay McCaskill (145), Jesse Murphy (152), Lucas Swartz (160), Brayden Yoder (182), Aiden Barker (195) and Kyle Oram (220).

"Their lighter weights were pretty solid and they had a lot of experienced young guys on their roster," Bovaird said. "The Independence dual could have gone either way. Kaven (Bartlett) lost a close one against the same kid who beat him at sub-state last year. Last year it was 1-0, this time it was 3-2. He's making big strides already."

"Elijah (Eslinger) got caught by a physical attack and then lost his balance for a split second, and that's what cost him. Next time he sees that wrestler, it'll be a different story. We had big wins from McCaskill, Murphy, Swartz, Yoder, and Oram. Murphy has the most high school wrestling experience of all of them, and he just started in eighth grade."

The Wildcats came back strong against Gardner as they got wins from Noah Cotter (106), Colton Blue (113), Bartlett (126), J'Lee Collins (132), McCaskill, Murphy, Ashton Moore (170), Yoder and Barker.

Against Baldwin, the dual could have gone either way. Louisburg was down 33-25 with three wrestlers left.

Barker and Elijah Eslinger (285) each got a pin, but Oram was pinned at 220 which gave the Bulldogs the slight edge. Cotter, Blue, Bartlett, Traden Noll (138) and Moore also got victories for Louisburg.

“We had a tough night, losing two close duals that could have done either way,” Bovaird said. “I was hoping for different results, but there’s lots of silver linings to the night. We had winning records from Cotter, Blue, Bartlett, McCaskill, Murphy, Moore, and Yoder. Barker was undefeated on the night and is sitting at an 8-0 record so far. Collins got his first win of the season as well.”

Louisburg is back in action tonight as the Wildcats travel to Olathe West for a dual. They end the 2021 schedule with tournament action Saturday in Tonganoxie.

“We’ve got high standards for the program this year, so we’re taking our competitions very seriously,” Bovaird said. “The struggle is going to be keeping the team from dwelling on losses or mistakes. Big life lesson there – learn from the losses or they’re going to continue to impact your growth negatively. We need to be resilient and bounce back from the tough matches and work to improve every day.”

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## **Wildcats open season with runner-up finish at Fort Scott**





FORT SCOTT – The first dual of the season didn't go the way the Louisburg wrestling team had hoped it would Friday at the Fort Scott Dual Tournament.

However, it was the way the Wildcats responded that made the day all the more worth it.

After a setback to Blue Valley Southwest to start the day, Louisburg reeled off four straight victories to earn second place at the tournament and the Wildcats created some momentum moving forward.

"All in all, it was a pretty solid start to the season, and I'm proud of how the guys competed," Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. "If you look at our line-up compared to our opponents, we had a very young and inexperienced team. We had six freshmen and three sophomores, and four of the fourteen wrestlers are first- or second-year wrestlers. But we fielded a full team, top to bottom, for the first time in a long time, and because we had that depth and consistency, we were able to edge out a couple of teams in close duals."

Louisburg opened the tournament against the No. 5 team in Class 5A, Blue Valley Southwest, and came away with a 54-27 setback.

The Wildcats then went up against Fort Scott, and found themselves down three points going into the last match, but junior Elijah Eslinger came through with a pin in the heavyweight match to give Louisburg a 42-39 victory.

That momentum carried over into the rest of the day as the Wildcats defeated Atchison County, 42-37 and Anderson County,

60-24. Louisburg ended its day with a 78-6 victory over team mixed with junior varsity wrestlers.

Senior Aiden Barker had a strong first outing as he ended the day with a 5-0 record and three pins. The No. 4 wrestler in Class 4A opened the tournament with a victory over a state qualifier.

“Barker definitely had a great day,” Bovaird said. “His first match was the biggest test – he wrestled a strong kid from Blue Valley Southwest who was a state qualifier two years ago in 5A and a part of a phenomenal and well-coached BVSW program. Barker showed a great deal of maturity, composure, and leadership in his matches throughout the day.”

Eslinger also had a big day for Louisburg. Along with his match sealing win over Fort Scott, he finished with a 5-0 record and three pins as well.

“One of the most exciting things about this sport is seeing the growth from year-to-year,” Bovaird said. “Elijah started off as a freshman wrestling varsity at 285 because we had no one else. In the past two years, he’s gotten tons more confidence and experience. Last year, he started being our true anchor – in a close dual, we knew he could seal the victory at the last weight. All of the matches in a dual are important, but it’s pretty exciting when a dual comes down to the final match. He’s done a great job showing composure and reliability in his position on the team, especially in the Fort Scott dual.”

Junior captain Kaven Bartlett had a successful day with a 4-1 record and two pins at 126 pounds. Freshman Ashton Moore was 4-1 with four pins at 170 pounds, while sophomore Noah Cotter (106) and freshman Colton Blue (113) were also 4-1.

Freshman Greysen Dixon (120), junior Jesse Murphy (152), freshman Lucas Swartz (160) and freshman Brayden Yoder (182) also had winning records on the day.

“Noah Cotter and Colton Blue had a lot of opens in their weights, but they’re going to have great seasons,” Bovaird said. “Both are hammers on the mat and have great work ethics. Kaven was very strong in his matches, and his lone loss on the day (5-3 overtime loss) was not without controversy. He controlled that match and wrestled his tail off from the first to the last whistle, and that goes for all of his matches. Ashton also had a great day, losing only to the No. 1 ranked wrestler in Kansas 5A.”

Louisburg will try and keep its winning ways going Friday when the Wildcats travel to Baldwin for another dual tournament. Matches begin at 4:30 p.m.