

LRC gearing up for baseball, softball season



At this point in the year, it isn't uncommon to see the ballfields at Lewis-Young Park packed full of parents and players creating summer memories on the diamond.

This year, however, is anything but normal.

Like the rest of us, the Louisburg Recreation Commission has found that out first hand as the COVID-19 pandemic forced it to quickly come up with new programs, cancel seasons and try their best to keep others going.

That is what LRC director Diana Moore and the LRC board did as they revamped plans and provided programming while people were stuck at home.

"The crazy thing was the governor closed the schools on March 17 and ironically we had a board meeting that night," Moore said. "It was a very emotional day all-around. The board wanted to see what we could do with virtual stuff and the next day we just got to work. We came up with virtual classes so we had like cooking classes, yoga and other stuff like that.

"Then we did the social distance Easter scavenger hunt. We had to work with the police department, city hall and the health department people, but it was fun. Wine testing and cookie decorating along with a virtual fishing department. We did Bingo and Wheel of Fortune on Friday nights. We just changed how we did things, but we were still getting ready for

sports.”

Baseball and softball were still on the forefront of the LRC’s minds as they waited for guidelines to reopen, which changed on a weekly, and sometimes, daily basis. The rec commission was forced to cancel the spring soccer season and many on the board didn’t want the same thing to happen to baseball and softball.

The only question would be is would they have the time to get it all in. As it turned out, they had just enough to work with.

When Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly shifted powers to each individual county, it gave members of the commission a good feel on what they had to do to get sports going again.

Normally, practice starts in April, but with a tight time schedule, the older baseball and softball teams started practice on June 15, while the T-Ball and coach pitch teams will begin on June 22. Games will then begin for everyone on June 29.

For guidance, Moore attended Zoom meetings with the Kansas Recreation and Park Association to learn what guidelines they would have to adhere to when games started again.

“We had many meetings with the KRPA and they have guidelines for reopening everything from how we open the concession, how we sanitize the restroom and how to socially distance,” Moore said. “A couple of the big changes will be that parents won’t sit in the bleachers and they will have to bring their own chairs. Families will be together but they will have to social distance around the fields. We are going to move the bleachers closer and use them as extended dugouts.

“We bought cleaning stuff, so we have spray down the dugouts, bleachers and restrooms after each practice or game. We are trying to do more doubleheaders and try to eliminate extra

people crossing each other's paths. For t-ball, I think I will have them sit with their parents when they bat since there are no bleachers there."

Although they are limited to what they can sell, the LRC will also be running a concession stand each night with prepackaged items and sealed drinks. That means no nachos, hot dogs or popcorn.

There will also be two umpires in each game, but they will be eliminating the home plate umpire and instead have two out in the field, with one calling balls and strikes from there. Players will also need to make sure they have their own glove and helmet.

"Normally the umpires will get balls from the home team, but the umpires will no longer touch the balls," Moore said. "When your team is out on the field, you will use your balls and vice versa. Trying to eliminate as much of the sharing stuff as we can. We also had to put social distance signs all-around. There just needs to be constant reminders.

"Glove and helmet – anything you wear has to be your own. There will be no catcher for 8-and-under and it also freed up catching gear to where we could have two sets for 10s, 12s and 14s."

In the last couple of months, Moore has been frantically meeting with other towns to try and figure out a schedule. Towns they would normally schedule with, like Paola and Osawatomie, didn't have the numbers to put together teams – while Garnett was able to field two baseball teams.

That left Louisburg teams having to play each other, which Moore was able to make work. Louisburg had more than 300 kids sign up for baseball and softball, which was down from about 400 a year ago.

"Numbers weren't way down," Moore said. "We had some that had

to pull out due to other plans, but we had more on the wait list than more than we had back out and we were able to get everybody in.

“When the rec directors got together early on, we decided we were going to go with the town that had the stricter rules. We have found a lot of people in the smaller towns are out of work and the kids can’t afford to play. So many of the towns we were supposed to play, couldn’t field teams so we are just trying to keep it all Louisburg. Then for softball we only have one 12-and-under softball team, but we have lined up with a couple local traveling teams that play up in the city and they are going to help us get more games as well.”

The LRC also has a new addition to its staff as Louisburg resident Amy Buffington was hired to be the new recreation coordinator and she is looking forward to what lies in store.

“I am very excited to be on board here,” Buffington said. “I already knew that Diana and the rec did a lot, but when I started here I quickly realized it was even more than I originally thought. I am really looking forward to working alongside everyone.”

Moore also knows that Buffington was the right person for job and that she will be a great asset to the LRC.

“It is awesome having Amy because she already knows Louisburg,” Moore said. “She knows the families, knows the kids, the town and the sports. She already knew what we were doing and that was a slam dunk to me. She came in with ideas and she will be a big help for sure. A year from now, I really think we can play off each other’s strengths.”

Wildcats 10-U softball team wins OGSA league title



The Louisburg Wildcats, a 10-and-under softball team, recently finished first in the 'C' division of the Olathe Girls Softball Association with a 12-2 record and the players were awarded their trophy on July 18. Members of the team are (front row, from left) Ashley Bell, Brooklyn Harmon, Jenna Cauthon, Katie McKain, Ashley Moreau, Ally Brown; (back row) Sami Lane, Rylee Hickey, Addy Stohs, Ava Halbert, Izzy Moreland and Kate Frederick.

A group of 10-and-under softball players from Louisburg recently took the Olathe Girls Softball Association (OGSA) by storm.

The Wildcats, who competed in the 10-and-under 'C' division, won the league title with a 12-2 record as they wrapped up their OGSA campaign. Louisburg picked up its first-place trophy during the OGSA awards ceremony on July 18 in Olathe.

It was a culmination of what was a busy season for the Wildcat girls.

"When we decided to take these girls two years ago, we promised a couple things – they would have fun and they would get better," head coach Dustin Harmon said. "This year I expected a lot out of them because we started practice in February and didn't let up. Our goal was to win league which

we dominated the league, and to win tournaments. We played against some great teams in Kansas City and these girls would not back down from a fight.

“They always gave the effort and hustle that we wanted out of them. I’ve coached a lot of teams in different sports, but this team was on top of the list. The friendships and dedication these girls are developing is special. I’m looking forward to watching them to keep growing and being successful.”

Members of the Wildcat team are Ashley Bell, Ally Brown, Jenna Cauthon, Kate Frederick, Ava Halbert, Brooklyn Harmon, Rylee Hickey, Sami Lane, Katie McKain, Ashley Moreau, Izzy Moreland and Addy Stohs.

The Wildcats were coached by Dustin Harmon, Brandi Hickey, Adrienne Lane, Amber Moreau and Scott Cauthon.

The team, which is made up of upcoming fifth and sixth-graders in Louisburg, also played in three tournaments throughout the season. Louisburg posted a 10-4 mark in those tournaments and had a total record of 21-6 on the season.

In the spring, the Wildcats competed in the ASA Spring Fling tournament in Lee’s Summit, Mo., where they finished third in their bracket.

Louisburg fared well in their final two tournaments of the year. In the ASA Summer Kickoff tournament in Lee’s Summit in May, the Wildcats advanced to the top bracket and finished second overall.

The Wildcats did the same in the ASA Summer Sizzler tournament, which was held at the OGSA Complex in Olathe. Louisburg finished undefeated in pool play and advanced as the No. 2 seed in bracket play, before falling in the championship game and took second.

If your summer team had a lot of success, and you would like them featured on Louisburg Sports Zone, please email me at louisburgsportszone@gmail.com for more information.

Hankinson, Svoboda help KC Infinity to successful season



Louisburg's Kennia Hankinson (front row, far right) and Madison Svoboda (back row, far left) have helped the KC Infinity 16A softball team to successful summer so far, including a tournament win and another top 3 finish.

Their high school season was over more than two months ago, but Louisburg High School juniors Kennia Hankinson and Madison Svoboda are still in softball mode.

Hankinson and Svoboda traded in their Lady Cat uniforms for a KC Infinity one for the summer as the Louisburg duo is currently helping the second-year 16A team to a successful year.

Although KC Infinity still has two tournaments remaining this season, the team has recorded a 20-8 record and are currently

ranked No. 1 in the USSSA Power Rating Points in Kansas and are No. 12 in the nation.

KC Infinity recently finished first in the Northwest Arkansas Showcase and took third in the Heartland Showcase College Exposure.

Hankinson, the team's starting shortstop, currently has a .420 average on the year and a .990 OPS. Svoboda, has also had a good season at the plate with a .328 average and an .848 OPS as the Infinity starting second baseman.

"Kennia has done a fantastic job at shortstop for us and has been very consistent in the leadoff spot in our lineup putting pressure on teams from the first pitch," Infinity coach Melissa Fast said. "Madison has driven in 14 runs this summer including a two run walk off home run in our last tournament. She has also played very solid at second base."

The Louisburg duo are a part of an Infinity team that is made up for players from Paola, Manhattan, Perry, Olathe, Ottawa, Basehor, Eudora, Adrian (Mo.) and Cameron (Mo.).

Both players had good seasons for the Lady Cats last spring, including Svoboda, who earned second team all-Frontier League honors.

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LARA Softball recaps from

June 9-23



Isabella Moreland stretches out to make contact with a pitch during a game for Team Waite earlier this season. Moreland and the Lucky Charms picked up three victories recently.

Here are LARA softball recaps from June 9 through June 23. If you would like to report game stats and have your team included in the wrap-ups, please email louisburgsportszone@gmail.com.

8-and-under softball

June 9

Lucky Charms (Team Waite) 9, Osawatomie 0

The Lucky Charms, coached by Jamie Waite, took care of business when they traveled to Osawatomie and came away with 9-0 victory in three innings on June 9.

They scored three runs in the first inning, four in the second and two more in the third to put the game away.

McKenna Lohse led the Lucky Charms bats with a pair of doubles. Ella Lancaster also had two hits, which included a double. Isabella Moreland, Erin Apple and Ally Brown also

finished with two hits.

Bronwynn Williams, Macie Baima, Brinley White, Claire Railsback and Shyloh Waite all added a single each in the win.

June 10

Lucky Charms 12, Parker 10

The Lucky Charms traveled to Parker on June 10 and came away with a two-run victory thanks to a couple big innings. The Louisburg team scored five runs in the first and second innings to hold on for the win.

Several players had big games at the plate for the Lucky Charms. Brinley White, Isabella Moreland, Ally Brown and Bronwynn Williams all had three hits. White recorded a run-scoring triple and Ella Lancaster added a double.

Erin Apple, Lancaster, McKenna Lohse, Macie Baima and Claire Railsback all had two hits each.

Parker had the tying runs on base in the third inning, but Moreland tagged the final out at home plate to seal the win.

June 11

Lucky Charms 9, Osawatomie 5

The Lucky Charms hosted another Osawatomie team at Lewis-Young Park and they scored nine runs in the first two innings to secure the win.

Seven players finished the game with two hits. Ally Brown led the Lucky Charms bats with a pair of doubles. Ella Lancaster, Isabella Moreland and Bronwynn Williams also had two hits, which included a double each.

Erin Apple, McKenna Lohse and Brinley White also finished with two hits for the Lucky Charms. Macie Baima, Shyloh Waite and Madison Hill had a single each.

June 23

Mound City 6, Team Hickey 5

The Louisburg 8-and-under machine pitch softball team, coached by Brandi Hickey, traveled to Mound City on Wednesday and left with a tough 6-5 loss.

Team Hickey scored three runs in the final inning to take a 5-4 lead, but Mound City rallied for two runs in the bottom of the fourth to take the win.

Six players had two hits for Team Hickey. Sami Lane and Megan Quinn each finished with a pair of hits and also scored twice. Ashley Moreau, Jena Cauthon, Rylee Tune and Molly Eidemiller also recorded two hits.

Jill Strubbe, Rylee Hickey and Brooklyn Harmon also finished with a single each.

Team Hickey also did some work on defense as Tune caught a pop fly at the pitcher spot and then threw the runner out at first to get the double play.

LARA softball recaps from June 2-6



Cate Finch, who plays 8-and-under softball for Team Van Tyle, makes contact with a pitch during a game earlier this season. Team Van Tyle came up just short on June 6 as it fell to the Lucky Charms 8-5.

Here are LARA softball recaps from June 2 through June 6. If you would like to report game stats and have your team included in the wrap-ups, please email louisburgsportszone@gmail.com.

12-and-under softball

June 4

Louisburg 10, Paola 4 – Game 1

The Louisburg 12-and-under softball team, which is coach by Travis Heston, got its doubleheader with Paola started off right.

Louisburg scored five runs in each of the first two innings on its way to a 10-4 victory over Paola. Paola scored four runs in the second inning, but couldn't complete the comeback in the three inning contest.

Jenna Terry pitched for Louisburg and gave up just one hit in the winning effort. Terry also finished with a double, while Jada Frazier and Skyla Meyer each added singles

Louisburg 14, Paola 5 – Game 2

Louisburg rounded out the doubleheader in convincing fashion as it scored seven runs in each of the first two innings to defeat Paola 14-5 to complete the sweep.

Emma Heston was the starter for Louisburg and gave up just two hits thanks to some good defense from catcher Brynnlin Kroyman and third baseman Skyla Meyer.

Meyer and Jada Frazier each had a pair of hits to lead the Louisburg bats. Karly Rice also had a hit in the victory.

8-and-under softball

June 2

Lucky Charms (Team Waite) 12, Osawatomie 0

The Lucky Charms, coached by Jamie Waite and sponsored by White's Automotive, scored five runs in the second and fourth innings to cruise to a 12-0 victory. In their 29 at-bats, the Lucky Charms had hits in 20 of them.

Madison Hill and Isabella Moreland each finished with three hits to lead the Lucky Charms' bats. Erin Apple had a pair of doubles, while Bronwynn Williams and Ally Brown each had two hits, including a double each.

Brinley White and Claire Railsback each added a pair of singles. Ella Lancaster (double), McKenna Lohse (double), Shyloh Waite (double) and Macie Baima (single) also finished with a hit each.

June 6

Lucky Charms 8, Team Van Tyle 5

Trailing by two runs, the Lucky Charms used a 5-run fourth inning to rally for an 8-5 over Team Van Tyle at Lewis-Young Park. The Lucky Charms pounded out 17 hits, including several in the final inning.

The Lucky Charms had a 3-1 lead going into the third inning, but Van Tyle scored four runs in the frame to take a 2-run lead before the Lucky Charms' rally in the fourth.

Erin Apple and Ella Lancaster each finished with three hits to lead the Lucky Charms offense. Isabella Moreland, Ally Brown, Macie Baima and Bronwynn Williams also added two hits each.

Brinley White, McKenna Lohse and Shyloh Waite finished with a single each to contribute in the win.

LARA baseball, softball recaps from May 26-27



Louisburg's Erin Apple makes contact with a pitch for the Lucky Charms during their May 26 game against Team Van Tyle at Lewis-Young Park. The Lucky Charms won the game 7-2.

Here are LARA baseball and softball recaps from May 26 and 27 out at Lewis-Young Park.

8-and-under Girls Machine Pitch

May 26

Lucky Charms (Team Waite) 7, Van Tyle 2

The Lucky Charms used a big second inning to propel them to a 7-2 win over Team Van Tyle on May 26 at Lewis-Young Park.

The Lucky Charms scored five runs in the second, one in the third and another in the fifth to help put the game away. Van Tyle scored a run in the fifth and another in the sixth to get on the scoreboard.

Macie Baima, Madison Hill and Isabella Moreland each had three hits to lead the Lucky Charms bats. They also had four other players with a multiple hit game.

Erin Apple, Bronwynn Williams, Ally Brown and Claire Railsback each added a pair of hits for the Lucky Charms. Moreland led the third inning off with double for the Lucky Charms' lone extra-base hit and Apple drove her home with an RBI single.

8-and-under Boys Machine Pitch

May 27

Wea Eagles 6, Team Swartz 1

The Wea Eagles, sponsored by Alpha Mortgage, broke open a tie game with a four-run third inning on its way to a 6-1 victory over Team Swartz.

The Eagles scored a run in the first inning, but Swartz tied

the game with a run in the second. The Eagles scored five runs in the final two innings to pull away for the win.

Scott Wallace and Keegan Rogers led the Wea bats with a 3-for-3 performance and Rogers also made the defensive play of the game. Rogers fielded a sharply hit ball at shortstop and tagged the runner for the third out to prevent Swartz from taking the lead in the second inning.

Three other Eagles players had multiple hits. Trevor Myers, Roy Bauer and Michael Foote each finished with two singles to help the Eagles to a win.

May 26

Team Willey 9, Wea Eagles 6

The Wea Eagles lost its first game of the season to Team Willey despite a late rally in the fifth inning. The Eagles scored four runs in the frame but couldn't come back in the 9-6 loss.

Willey scored two runs in the first, one in the second, four in the third and two in the fourth to get the victory.

Scott Wallace led the Eagle bats as he finished with three hits, including a double. Bobby Johnson also finished the game with three singles.

Roy Bauer and Cooper Riley also had multiple hits for Louisburg with two singles each.

Eagles catcher Harry Kraft had the defensive play of the game as he fielded a bunt and made diving tag to get the runner out at home.

LARA recaps from May 18



Here are LARA softball and baseball results from May 18.

8-and-under machine pitch

GIRLS

Team Hickey 8, Team Waite 5

Team Hickey used a big first inning to give them a win in their season opener. They scored five runs in the first inning and two more in the second to take an early 7-run lead.

Team Waite, which is sponsored by White's Automotive, was able to climb back into the game with a run in the third, three in the fifth and another run in the sixth, but they ran out of time.

Ella Lancaster led Waite with four hits, including a double in the 3-run fifth inning. McKenna Lohse and Bronwynn Williams each had three hits as well.

Madison Hill finished with two hits, including a 2-run single in the fifth for Waite. Shyloh Waite and Erin Apple also had a pair of hits.

BOYS

Wea Eagles 7, Team Blancarte 5

The Wea Eagles scored seven runs in its first three innings on its way to a 2-run victory over Team Blancarte.

The Eagles, sponsored by Alpha Mortgage, scored a run in the first, four in the second and two more in the third to pull away. Blancarte kept the game close with four runs in its half of the third and another in the fourth.

Roy Bauer led the Eagles at the plate three hits, including a pair of doubles. The Eagles also had five players with a multi-hit game.

Scott Wallace finished with three hits, including two singles and a double. Keegan Rogers and Blaise Vohs each had a double and a single. Bobby Johnson and Harry Kraft also had two singles for the Eagles.