

LYONS

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This past fall, Lyons was a key component of the Wildcats’ 7-4 season that featured a 5-0 start, earning district runner-up honors and hosting a playoff game.

Playing on both sides of the ball, Lyons came up with several crucial receptions to extend drives when the Wildcats needed a play before turning around and halting momentum on the defensive end.

As a senior, Lyons rushed for 29 yards and hauled in 22 passes for 223 yards and a touchdown. He also returned a kickoff for a touchdown against Mercer County when the Wildcats won 41-38 in overtime to clinch the district runner-up spot.

On defense, he accounted for 58 tackles, 23 solo and 35 assisted.

The high-achieving season was a stark difference from his freshman year when the Wildcats won just one game.

“Anyone who’s been around the program knows that my freshman year in 2019 was really rough,” said Lyons. “To go from that to where we are now, it’s just super special and it makes me feel good about myself as a person.”

True to his roots, Lyons also expressed his gratitude for his hometown to rally around the program and support them through all the highs and lows.

Elevating the program from one win to seven and a home playoff game is one thing, but having a loved one on the sidelines for every moment makes the process even more special.

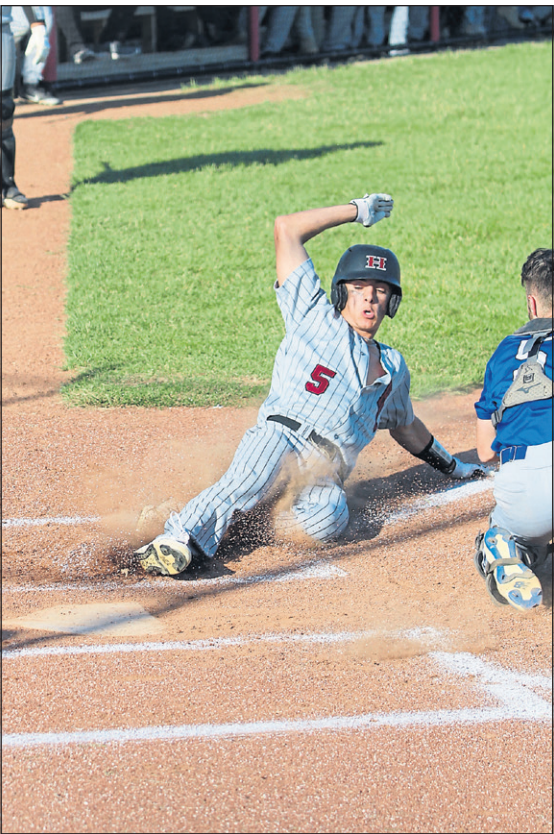
Lyons was fortunate to have his father, Tres’, on the football coaching staff to share in the remarkable turnaround.

“It was really special to share the triumphs and the low points with someone that has been so close to me for so long and to make him proud and make everybody proud,” said Lyons. “Then it’s a little extra something you’re playing for too if you think about it because no one wants to perform badly in front of their parents.”

Described as a “huge sports guy,” Tres’ played in high school



Left: Luke Lyons puts up a shot in the paint against Eminence in the 31st District Tournament in February. **Right:** Luke Lyons slides into home plate against Walton-Verona on senior night.



Photos by Abby Hooven

and college and coached his son since he started playing sports.

“He gives it to me worse than he gives it to anybody else because I’m his kid, and he’ll tell you that,” said Lyons. “I don’t mind it. I know at the end of the day it makes me better. It makes me more well-rounded and more responsible, knowing that he’s gonna hold me to a high standard.”

Lyons pivoted from a football program on the up and up to a basketball program growing under head coach Derek Tingle.

With a young team, Lyons served as a leader for the underclassmen but also knew his perspective on the season was to “have fun.”

“Every day, we kind of came in with the mentality that we’re here to have fun and then to develop the guys that are with us because, at the end of the day, all you can do is try and get better every day,” said Lyons. “So having that mentality going into practice and games every day just helped keep the team’s spirit kind of alive and give us something to work for.”

His positive outlook on sports situations has been reinforced by those in his life, including his parents, who have similar stories to his own.

“I’ve learned a lot from my dad and his dad and my mom (Tina) and how they always say that you only get this time in your life once really to go out and just have fun, so why waste it worrying about stuff you can’t control, why not just have a good time,” said Lyons.

Lyons carried this mentality into baseball season under first-year head coach Zak Yates, but he also expanded his horizons to run track along with playing on the diamond, something that wasn’t possible until this past year.

Former varsity baseball coach Stuart Dill had a rule that players were unable to run track and play baseball at the same time. With a new coach, Lyons and a couple others broached the subject with Yates, and he allowed them to participate in both.

“I was really grateful for that, and I had a great time. It was kind of a last-minute decision when we figured out we could do it,” said Lyons.

In his first and only track season, Lyons nearly qualified for state with a third place finish in the 400-meter dash in the region meet. His time of 54.57 ranks fifth in HCHS track history as well.

With his success and baseball teammate Jerred Slone reaching state in triple jump, Lyons shared that he sometimes wonders what could’ve been if they had participated for all four years.

“I would have loved all four years to be able to compete because the atmosphere around track meets and track period is just different,” said Lyons. “I told (track coach Leah Klemptner) and looking at our times, if we’d been doing this for a while, we could have done something special here and she kind of laughed it off as well... But at the end of the day, I don’t have any regrets.”

Along with his athletic endeavors, he was a member of Beta Club, National Honor Society and FBIA. Outside of school commitments, Lyons also works with his father in construction.

For his achievements, Lyons received both the Outstanding Senior Male and the Ross Wallace Award during Henry County’s awards night.

“It’s a huge honor to be recognized by the place I’ve grown up at and spent so much time and effort towards it,” said Lyons. “It feels really good to know that what I did amounted

to something that’s significant.”

With all his extracurriculars and interests, Lyons credits his parents for helping him stay motivated and focused on each task.

“They are huge motivators. My parents and my family in general give me a reason to do what I do every day and without them, there’s no way I could have done anything,” said Lyons. “It takes a village and the village that I got was super supportive and has made me into the person I am today.”

Lyons’ parents said they are proud of all their son has accomplished.

“We have been truly blessed by the Lord in our lives, and our children are the biggest blessings. Of course, we are so proud of Luke’s accomplishments. Naturally, we are biased as he is super special to us, but it is nice when others recognize his hard work,” said Tina and Tres’ Lyons.

His parents also took time to share how Lyons’ character helps set him apart from others.

“Luke has always been a hard-working person with a kind soul. As a natural-born leader, he has so many qualities exhibiting leadership: self-awareness, gratitude, empathy, courage and mostly integrity. He is steadfast in his course of doing things the right way,” Lyons’ parents said. “I think sports have played a big role in his life helping him navigate thus far. One of our favorite things is to watch our children compete and learn from these lessons, good or bad.”

Along with his parents, Lyons said coach Dill was one of his biggest supporters throughout high school.

“I give a lot of credit to coach Dill. He kind of took me under his wing and I learned the best from him on how to stay composed and have a good time and give it everything I got,” said Lyons.

In each sport, Lyons said each coach took time to support him and encourage him to pursue his dreams.

“It’s a huge confidence booster knowing that the people that are coaching you are taking care of you and really do care and really do believe in you,” said Lyons.

This fall, Lyons will head to Franklin College to continue his

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SHOOTOUT

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King added two points down low with 4:15 left and Hardy perfectly placed a floater along the baseline to bring the lead down to 50-30.

However, the Wildcats failed to score again until 7:55 left in the fourth quarter. Meanwhile, the Hawks went on a 7-0 run to end the third quarter with a 57-30 advantage and scored the first six points of the fourth quarter to bring their total point count in the run to 13.

King brought the run to a close with a point off a foul down low but the Hawks continued their success in the paint with two layups to bring the lead out to 67-31.

Nation and Drew Cole added three points to trim the lead down, but Pike County Central took advantage of sloppy passes by the Wildcats to add seven points in a row to the board.

During the run, the Hawks were fouled on a drive and the shooter missed the foul shot, but nabbed his own rebound and turned to make a three to push the lead to 74-34.

Cole buried a corner three with 1:29 left but the Hawks finished the game with another shot in the paint to put the final margin at 39 points.

The Wildcats followed up the loss with a more competitive game on Friday afternoon.

Henry County battled until the end but fell to Menifee County 61-54 in the second game of the day.

The Wildcats started with a full court press on defense that threw Menifee County out of sync. Neither team scored for the first 2:30 of action and Menifee County took the first lead with two points from Brevin Ricker.

Yet, Henry County followed with the next six points, all of which came in the paint. Menifee County also found success attacking the paint and regained the lead with a 6-0 run.



Abby Hooven

Blaik Nation and Drew Cole contest a drive by Menifee County’s Brevin Ricker in the first half of Friday’s 61-54 loss.



Abby Hooven

Jordan King attacks the rim against Pike County Central in Henry County’s first game of the KABC Titans Shootout.



Abby Hooven

Baylor Nolin releases a shot from behind the arc versus Menifee County.

Throughout the game, Menifee County had decent looks on drives but were swarmed by Henry County’s forwards that altered or blocked the opposing Wildcats’ shot attempts.

Tingle evened the score at eight all with two points off a drive, but Menifee County snagged the lead back with a wing three with 2:22 left in the opening period.

The Wildcats pulled back within one but went into the second quarter down 14-10 after Menifee County was fouled on a three at the buzzer and hit the free throws.

The opposing Wildcats scored the first basket of the second period but Henry County countered with a 9-0 run to take the lead. A short jumper from Hardy, two layups from Cole and a wing three by Nolin put the Wildcats ahead 19-16 with 6:06 left in the quarter.

Menifee County briefly regained the lead before Hardy buried a 3-pointer to give the Wildcats a two-point advantage.

The game evened again with 2:38 to go, but JJ Purvis snapped the tie with two points off a drive with 2:08 on the clock. Ricker scored on a layup with 35 seconds left to tie the game at 26 after two quarters, though.

The third quarter was back and forth, with the lead constantly flipping between both teams for the first five minutes of the period. Each squad found a rhythm attacking the paint, with King and Nolin each dropping in layups to put Henry County ahead.

Menifee County rattled off eight consecutive points to build a 40-33 lead, but Tingle dropped in two points off a drive and Hardy swished a straight away three to cut the lead down. Yet, Menifee County still held a 41-37 advantage after three quarters.

Nolin trimmed the margin to two with a layup to start the fourth period before Menifee County pushed the lead back to six.

Tingle found Nolin on a breakaway for an uncontested layup to bring the score to 45-41 but the opposing Wildcats brought the lead back out the six with 5:51 left.

Henry County further attacked the paint and Cole dropped in a layup with contact after a drive from King to pull the Wildcats back within four.

The full court press from the outset of the game returned in crunch time, but Menifee County didn’t relinquish the lead.

King put Henry County within three on a 3-point play and Nolin knocked down a timely 3-pointer with 53 seconds left to put the deficit at 56-52. However, two technical on the Wildcats helped Menifee County pull away, and a layup by Nolin with 12 seconds left was not enough to complete a comeback.

Henry County finished the tournament on Saturday, June 17 against Frankfort. The Panthers narrowly defeated the Wildcats 55-54.

FISH

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“Well, they’ll eliminate it,” Jacobs said of the grass carp impact upon pond moss. “That’s their purpose. They work it like a cow in a pasture. They’ll just graze it down.”

Jacobs doesn’t hatch the sterile grass carp himself at his Catfish Whiskers Farm facil-

ities, but he brings plenty of them with him on his stops for his customers as part of his overall service for pond management.

“Really, to properly manage a private pond, it’s not just stocking one time and you’re done,” Jacobs said. “It’s making adjustments.”

Another fish species that Jacobs brought for sale in Eminence handles another aspect of pond management,

both from the recreational side, as well as water quality for mud bottom ponds. — channel catfish. While the channel catfish is more of a game fish that actively pursues live prey, they’re also useful for cleaning up pond bottoms as scavengers.

One fish species that Jacobs didn’t have this time around for his stop in Eminence will be in his tank when he returns in the fall — crappie. Jacobs

said he doesn’t bring crappie during late spring because the hatched crappie are more susceptible to mortality when stocked into ponds with warmer temperatures.

Jacobs said his business has continued to thrive since he left his position as a fisheries biologist with U.S. Fish & Wildlife in the late 1970s.

“Overall, business has grown, but that’s just a function of being in business for so

long since 1978,” Jacobs said, adding that he has included Eminence in his annual stops for the past 35 years.

That longevity has established a tradition that hopefully will continue for Henry County pond owners and those in the rest of Kentucky served by Jacobs and his Catfish Whiskers Farm.

“We probably grow a million fish a year and sell them all,” he said.