

LHS cross country hits ground running



Members of the Louisburg High School cross country team (from left) Austin Raetzel, Spencer Rogers, Abby Bergman, Wyatt Reece and coach John Reece wrap up a morning workout Wednesday at the school.

Nearly every morning during the summer, Louisburg High School cross country coach John Reece woke up before the sunrise, laced up his running shoes and got ready for a nice jaunt around Louisburg.

More than a dozen Wildcat runners joined Reece on his daily routine to help get in shape for the upcoming season. Instead of holding just a week-long camp, Reece wanted to give his runners a chance to work out on a daily basis throughout the summer.

“I am here for them five days a week and I am here if they want to run,” Reece said. “Coach A (Arianne Seidl) comes over 2-3 times a week, brings her youngest son, puts him in the stroller and away we go. The core group has been better this year and hopefully that will pay off come this season.”

So around 7 a.m. every day, the group of Wildcat runners racked up the miles in an effort to put themselves in the best

possible position to find success for the 2015 season.

Reece also got strong leadership throughout the summer from a few different people. Senior Spencer Rogers and sophomore Wyatt Reece were there most days for the boys team, as was senior Abby Bergman for the girls squad.

“Spencer has been here almost every single day to work out,” Reece said. “He is a good person to work around and is a great kid and a great student. He is an all-around kid that has put in the time here and he, and our team, is going to benefit from it. Wyatt has been here unless he was at cross country camp or we were on vacation and he has stepped up to become a spiritual leader and talking everybody up.

“Abby has been great and has been here almost every day as well as a senior. She ran six miles for the first time the other day and she was thrilled about it. She has put the time in and will be a good leader and running from the middle of our group. She will keep the other kids honest with her work ethic.”

There was a big change made to the Kansas cross country landscape in June when the Kansas State High School Activities Association voted to move all girls postseason competitions from a 4-kilometer to a 5-kilometer race – the same distance as the boys.

Each school that hosts a meet has the option to keep the 4K or move to a 5K, but postseason races will go to the new distance. Reece is in favor of the change and doesn't think his girls will have a big problem adjusting to the new format.

“We won't change a whole lot with them,” Reece said. “We will increase their long run base a little bit and that should help them out a little. I think it is great that we are running the 5K now. College coaches are excited about it. Some high schools coaches aren't, and some girls are a little iffy about it, but it is less than a half-mile farther and that is what

they have to understand. It is not a huge change.

“We are planning on running the 5K at our home meet because that is the meet before league and I believe they (the Frontier League) will decide to run the 5K to prepare them for regionals and state. Eventually all invitationals will do it in the near future.”

In just a matter of days, Reece will have his entire squad working with him as the first day of practice begins Aug. 17 and he is hoping he can duplicate the strong turnout from a year ago.

“We had a few freshmen run with us this summer, but I am not sure what the turnout will be,” Reece said. “I hope to hit 30 again, but not sure if we will get there. I had some girls say they aren’t coming back because of the increase to the 5K, but we will just have to see. I am happy with the group I have coming back though.”