

Lady Cat runners make history with team title



The Louisburg High School girls cross country team won its first team title in the program's history Thursday during the Ramsey Invitational at Prairie View High School. Members of the team are (from left) Alex Miller, Liz Hildreth, Kaitlyn Gaza, Isabelle Holtzen, Madelynn Yalowitz, Abby Bergman and Savannah Reinhart.

LA CYGNE – As the Louisburg girls cross country team made its way across the finish line Thursday at the Ramsey Invitational, the Lady Cats had no idea they were making history.

For the first time in the existence of the program, the Lady Cats won a meet team title as they ran away from the competition at Prairie View High School. Louisburg won the Ramsey Invitational with 27 points, which was 40 points ahead of runner-up Blue Valley.

The Lady Cats had four runners finish in the top 10 and win individual medals. Varsity runners Madelynn Yalowitz, Isabelle Holtzen, Liz Hildreth, Kaitlyn Gaza, Savannah Reinhart, Alex Miller and Abby Bergman also left with team gold medals.

“We have had good finishes in the past, but we have never had

a group that has done that, which is just fantastic,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “It is very fun. You can’t help but smile when those things happen. They are coming together like I hoped they could and would.”

Louisburg also got some good news on the boys’ side as sophomore Wyatt Reece finished in the top five. Wyatt ran a personal best 18 minutes and 53 seconds to finish fourth and help the boys to a fourth-place team finish.

“I thought I did pretty well,” Reece said. “I was able to get a personal record by 30 seconds so that was really good. It got off to a fast start and I was able to just settle in and everything else seemed to go well.

“I ran a personal record here last year and this is a course where you can see people the whole time. You can see people in front of you, if you have a sharp turn you can see people behind you, so it gives you a good idea of where you are with the rest of the field.”



Kaitlyn Gaza races toward the finish line for Louisburg during the Ramsey Invitational on

Thursday.

Yalowitz led a group of Lady Cat runners that crossed the finish early. The Louisburg junior came in fifth in 24:10 and the next three to follow were her teammates.

Holtzen, who ran side-by-side with Yalowitz for most of the race, came in shortly behind her and took sixth in 24:20.

"It was nice to have the whole team run together and this was probably the first time it has happened to us in a meet," Holtzen said. "We are just pushing each other, and having to stay with each other really I think helped the team out as a whole."

Hildreth and Gaza made their way through the field in the last mile as they came in seventh and eighth, respectively. Hildreth ran a 24:24 and Gaza followed just 10 seconds behind.

"I was out in the field yelling at them for most of the race, so I didn't get to see them finish, but it felt good to see them to continue to move up for the whole race," coach Reece said. "Our third and fourth runners (Hildreth and Gaza) made up a lot of ground at the end of the second mile to get into that position and finished the way we did."

Reinhart was next on the team in 18th overall with a time of 25:48 and Miller was 21st in 26:10. Bergman rounded out the Lady Cats in 26:25.

It was a finish the Lady Cat runners will never forget, but they did have a little extra motivation for this race.

"I thought we all did really well and we all pushed ourselves really hard to run our best, especially since coach told us we wouldn't have practice if we ran well this time, so I think that helped a lot," Yalowitz said.

As for Wyatt, he was able to get off to a strong start and

stay with the fast-moving pack early on in the boys race. He was able to gradually move his way up to fourth-place with a big finish.



Louisburg runners (from left) Austin Raetzel, Eddie Murphy, Jarod Rose, Wyatt Reece, Devyn Small and Zach Minor take off from their starting blocks Thursday at Prairie View.

“Wyatt did fantastic,” coach Reece said. “He started off with his first mile just under six minutes and did great. He ran his race at the beginning. The front group went out awful fast, and as he continued into the second mile, he just kept picking them off. I could tell in the third mile that his stride was quickening and his pace was increasing. Then in the last quarter-mile he just let it all go and good things happened.”

Senior Devyn Small was second on the Wildcat team as he ran a 20:40 to come in 20th overall. Fellow seniors Zach Minor (21:05) and Eddie Murphy (21:19) were 26th and 28th, respectively.

Sophomore Jarod Rose was 33rd in 21:38 and junior Austin Raetzel ran a 21:57 to take 36th.

In the junior varsity races, Bryce Kuhlman led Louisburg in 12th in 22:11. Gareth Baus (21st) and Michael Shaner (47th) also competed for the Wildcats.

Lilly Mick paced the Lady Cats in 12th overall with a time of 27:47. Tomi Frederes followed in 14th in 27:53 and Mara Justesen came in 15th in 28:12.

Lily Cook (17th), Bryn O'Meara (20th), Cierra Rose (33rd), Hailey Crowder (35th), Alexa Goodspeed (36th), Ryan Caldwell (38th) and Grace Rolofson (43rd) also ran for Louisburg.

The Wildcats return to action Thursday when they travel to the Pittsburg Invitational. Races are set to begin at 4 p.m.