

Wildcats running with team concept



Louisburg High School cross country runners (from left) Abby Bergman, Eddie Murphy, Spencer Rogers and Wyatt Reece complete a run during a practice last month. The Wildcat team opens their season Thursday in Garnett.

It is easy to consider cross country an individual sport.

After every race, the runners are given individual medals depending on where they finish and it is all about how fast you can get to that finish line. Although that is all true, the Louisburg cross country team is taking in this season on how it finishes – as a group.

The Wildcats have 31 runners out this season, and while they have several returning from a season ago, it has been all about getting better as a team.

“This is a great group of kids this year,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “They work hard to encourage and push each other during workouts which makes the team even stronger in an individual/team sport.”

Louisburg has a big contingent of girl runners this year with 19 and it has featured tough competition in practice according to Reece as 10 runners are vying for seven varsity spots. The

Wildcats are looking for their first state participant since 2013.

Sophomore Isabelle Holtzen, who ran well a year ago, has emerged as the team's No. 1 runner. Junior Madelynn Yalowitz is also one of the team's top returning runners, but is working her way back from an injury.

Seniors Abby Bergman, Maddie McDaniel and Cierra Rose are also competing for a spot in the top seven.

A big difference for the girls will be their jump from 4-kilometer races to a 5K. It is roughly a half-mile longer than they were used to last season, but Reece knows they will handle the change with no problems.

"The girls are fine with the 5K," Reece said. "We have just upped our workouts to prepare for the difference from last year."

On the boys' side, half of their roster is filled with seniors, but it will be another sophomore to lead the way. Wyatt Reece has separated himself as the team's No. 1 runner as he tries to build on what was a solid freshman campaign.

Coach Reece says he has eight runners competing for the seven varsity spots and some of those six seniors are likely to be on it. Ben Brummel, Zach Minor, Eddie Murphy, Spencer Rogers, Michael Shaner and Devyn Small are all in their final season for the Wildcats.

"Practice has been going great," coach Reece said. "The team is training very well and my summer runners continue to increase their miles as we progress."

The Wildcats also have a unique schedule this season as they will have two home meets. They will have their annual Louisburg Invitational on Oct. 8 at Lewis-Young Park.

The next week, Louisburg will also host the Frontier League

meet Oct. 15 on the same course.

"It is nice to have home course advantage for league, but the caliber of our league is such that there is no home course advantage," coach Reece said. "We always set our goals high and we want to compete strong in league and take that momentum into the regional meet. State as a team is never out of the question as it often depends on what teams we run with at regionals."

Louisburg opens its season Thursday when it travels to Garnett for the Anderson County Invitational. The meet is set to begin at 4 p.m.

2015 LOUISBURG HIGH SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY SCHEDULE

Sept. 3 County	@ Anderson 4 p.m.
Sept. 10 Ottawa 4:30 p.m.	@
Sept. 17 Wellsville 4 p.m.	@
Sept. 24 View	@ Prairie 4 p.m.
Oct. 1 Pittsburg 4 p.m.	@
Oct. 8 Invitational	Louisburg 4 p.m.
Oct. 15	Frontier League

@ Louisburg

4 p.m