

Wildcats run strong at home meet



Louisburg cross country runners (from left) Alex Miller, Kaitlyn Gaza and Liz Hildreth get off to a good start during the Louisburg Invitational on Thursday at Lewis-Young Park. The Lady Cats finished second in the team standings with 37 points.

The Louisburg High School cross country team finally got the opportunity to run on its home course Thursday and it was a welcome sight for some.

However, just because it was at home, didn't mean it was easy.

The Wildcats faced a lot of challenges on their trek through Lewis-Young Park and they came away with a lot to be excited about.

Louisburg's girls squad continued its strong season as the Lady Cats finished second in the team standings with 37 points and medaled five runners in the process. Spring Hill won the meet with 21 points.

The boys also ran against some strong competition. Sophomore Wyatt Reece and senior Devyn Small both picked up medals as they earned a finish in the top 15.

Sophomore Isabelle Holtzen and junior Madelynn Yalowitz stayed near the front of the pack to lead the Louisburg girls to a third and fourth place finish, respectively. Holtzen ran a time of 23 minutes and 1 second and Yalowitz finished in 23:07.

“Isabelle and Madelynn ran a fantastic race,” coach John Reece said. “It was probably the most competitive race they have ran all year, trying to catch up to those two Spring Hill girls and that was really impressive to see. It shows me there is some definite possibilities for them for league and regionals if they are going to work that hard.

“The girls behind them did a great job. I didn’t think we could get Spring Hill team wise, but I wanted to give them a run and I was proud of their effort. For some of those girls, it was their first time on this course and it isn’t an easy one.”

Savannah Reinhart came in ninth (24:14), while Liz Hildreth (25:03) crossed the finish line in 12th and teammate Kaitlyn Gaza (25:59) was 14th to round out the Lady Cat medalists.

It was a difficult course for all the runners involved as they encountered a few different hills, including one near the finish line that tested a lot of the competitors.

“You have to sprint up it,” Holtzen said of the final climb. “I just wanted to get up it and give everything that I had. It is nice knowing the course because you know where the mile markers are, or if there is a hill coming up and I know that I have to power through it.

“Personally I think this is the best race that I have run all season. I think my mentality was better and it was the most I have ever pushed I was pretty proud of that. For the girls as whole, I think we did really well together.”

Senior Abby Bergman and freshman Alex Miller came up just

short in their quest for a medal. Bergman was 16th in 26:36 and Miller was 17th in 26:37.

Wyatt Reece continues to hit his stride as the season is drawing to a close. The Louisburg sophomore came in fifth overall in 18:37. He moved up from seventh to fifth place in the final three-quarters of a mile and didn't let up as he reached the finish.



Senior Zach Minor runs up the final hill on the course at Lewis-Young Park on Thursday during the Louisburg Invitational.

"I think I could have had a better time, but it was a good race," Wyatt said. "We had a bunch of good people running, and the ones that were in front of me were way in front of me. If I would have started out with them I might have had a chance, but I started a little further back.

"I just pushed there at the last hill. I didn't really save energy for the hill, but it is just about guts when you are heading to the finish. It is tough."

Small also had one of his better finishes of the season as he picked up a medal after he ran a 20:15 to come in 14th overall.

“We keep improving and working hard,” coach Reece said. “Devyn has run second all year long, he is a senior, and did a great job. He ran hard at the finish and held off that final kid at the end and that is great to see him get a medal.”

Zach Minor (20:40), Austin Raetzel (20:56) and Eddie Murphy (21:17) came in 18th, 19th and 20th, respectively on their home course. Spencer Rogers rounded out the Wildcat team in 22nd in 24:15.

In the team, standings the Wildcats were third with 69 points. Ottawa won the meet with 28 points and Spring Hill was second with 33. Spring Hill’s Dylan Brenneman took the top individual spot in 16:47.

The junior varsity girls also had a big day for Louisburg as the Lady Cats medaled eight of the top 10 runners in the race.

Lilly Mick won the race in 27:23 to lead the way for Louisburg. Lily Cook ran a time of 27:51 to come in second and Mara Justesen was third in 28:25.

Bryn O’Meara (fourth), Tomi Frederes (fifth), Lexie Reece (sixth), Hailey Crowder (ninth) and Cierra Rose (10th) all earned medals for the Lady Cats as well.

In the junior varsity boys race, Bryce Kuhlman led Louisburg in 13th place in 23:39 and Gareth Baus was 16th. Michael Shaner and Kennedy Unthank rounded out the Wildcat lineup in 18th and 19th, respectively.

Louisburg will get a chance to run on its home course one last time Thursday when it hosts the Frontier League meet. Races are set to begin at 4 p.m.