

Reece medals third, Lewer leads girls at home meet



Louisburg sophomore Kaitlyn Lewer makes her way up a hill alongside a Fort Scott runner Thursday at Lewis-Young Park during the Louisburg Invitational. Lewer led the Louisburg girls with a 10th place finish.

Lewis-Young Park felt right at home to the Louisburg High School cross country team as it competed in the Louisburg Invitational on Thursday.

The Wildcats took to the course in the six-team meet, and after running all those familiar hills, turns and straightaways, they came away with several pieces of hardware to show for it.

In all, five varsity runners earned medals, including junior Wyatt Reece who led the boys squad in third place overall and sophomore Kaitlyn Lewer, who paced the girls team in 10th. The Louisburg girls also took third in the team standings.

“The kids always get pumped for our home meet,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “They either love our course or hate it. Most love it because they continue to show improvement even though their time does not show it after running at Pittsburg’s flat, fast and short course.”

The meet was also an opportunity to honor Louisburg’s nine

senior runners. Seniors Lily Cook, Hailey Crowder, Kaitlyn Gaza, Liz Hildreth, Mara Justesen, Bryn O'Meara, Austin Raetzel, Grace Rolofson and Madelynn Yalowitz all ran on their home course for the final time.

"The senior group this year has been great," coach Reece said. "The ones that have given the program four years have made it better and the late comers only added to this. They have been positive influences and welcoming to incoming freshman as well as those who found our sport later in their school career. I wish I could have had all of them for four years, but I will take what I can get."

Wyatt Reece and teammate Tim Smith continue to run well for the Wildcats as both earned medals in the boys race. Wyatt's third place finish of 18 minutes and 3 seconds was his second-fastest time of the season.



Junior Wyatt Reece turns the corner and heads to the finish line Thursday during the Louisburg Invitational.

Smith ran a time of 19:04 to finish 11th overall, while Raetzl finished 29th overall in 21:14. Fort Scott won the boys team title with 40 points and Spring Hill was second with 42.

“Wyatt ran a great race,” coach Reece said. “He was pumped to run our course and really attacked it. He knew he was not going to be challenging for first, but was ready to fight it out for second until Fort Scott jumped in, which was great to have them, and he turned to claiming third in the race which he did. Looking at past performances and what he is doing this year, he has made big gains in his racing and his times will soon show that.”

Lewer picked a good time to run her best race of the season for the girls team. The Lady Cats had to run without their top runner, Trinity Moore, for a second straight week due to an injury, but Lewer stepped up to lead Louisburg in 10th with a season-best time of 22:47.

Teammates Isabelle Holtzen and Yalowitz also earned medals for the Louisburg girls team. Holtzen, a junior, took 12th in 23:09 and Yalowitz was 13th in 23:12.

Junior Reilly Alexander was next on the girls team in 22nd in 24:34. Sophomore Alex Miller (25:07), sophomore Shaylor Whitham (25:18) and freshman Emily Williams (25:18) came in 26th, 27th and 28th, respectively.



Senior Madelynn Yalowitz stays with a pack of runners Thursday. Yalowitz medaled 13th overall.

Louisburg was third in the team standing with 72 points and Fort Scott won the meet with 19 points. Spring Hill took second with 58.

“We are still improving as a group and we have a lot of work ahead of us,” coach Reece said. “Kaitlyn ran a great race to lead the team. She improved on her best time this year, from the Pittsburg meet the week before, and did it on a tougher course. The future this year, and years to come, looks bright with the hard working girls we have.”

In the junior varsity race, four Louisburg girls earned medals as Natalie George (fourth), Justesen (seventh), Hildreth (eighth) and Lilly Mick (10th) all finished in the top 10.

Now the Wildcats will venture into the postseason as they will travel to the Frontier League meet Thursday in Baldwin City. The following week, Louisburg will take part in the regional meet in Burlington.

As the season is coming to a close, the Louisburg coaches and runners are excited to see what transpires.

“Postseason is always nerve racking for the runners, Coach A (Arianne Seidl) and myself,” coach Reece said. “We want them all to finish on a positive note and walk away from the season proud of their accomplishments. We hope that we have prepared them to peak for their last race. They are excited to compete and to reach their individual and team goals at the end of the season.

“As I said at the beginning of the year, it is going to be a fun ride and it has been. No matter the outcomes at league, regional and hopefully state, it has been a great year full of great performances and a step forward for the program.”