

Holtzen, Dover earn state medals to lead Wildcats



Louisburg junior Isabelle Holtzen clears a height in the pole vault Saturday at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships in Wichita. Holtzen earned her first state medal after she finished seventh in the event.

WICHITA – Isabelle Holtzen and T.J. Dover left the state track meet last season knowing they just missed out on a state medal.

That feeling stuck with them for about a year and they weren't about to let it happen for a second straight time.

Holtzen and Dover each earned a state medal last weekend at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships at Wichita State University to lead Louisburg. The top eight in each event medal.

Holtzen competed in the pole vault Saturday morning and finished seventh overall after she cleared 10 feet. The Louisburg junior finished one spot away from a medal last season and was happy to be able to bring something home with her from Wichita.

"After I was done, I went and talked to coach (Andy) Wright and he told me he thought I medaled, but he told me to go ask to make sure I got seventh," Holtzen said. "I was just so

excited and all smiles that I could barely contain it.”

The state medal capped what was a special season for Holtzen. Earlier in the year she broke a 15-year old school record after she cleared 11 feet, 1 inch.

Holtzen competed in a tough pole vault field at state, including going up against Paola’s Samantha Van Hoecke, who won a state title after she cleared 12-6 and broke a state meet record.

“Going into state track always makes me nervous because the meet is so big compared to any of our other meets,” Holtzen said. “I was really hoping to vault my PR, or go at least 10-6 again, so I was a little disappointed when I got 10. At the same time, I was OK with it because I knew I gave everything I had.

“After being able to break the school record and get a medal at state, I know that I have to work hard this summer and throughout next year to be able to match the season I had. It definitely motivates me to work even harder. Now that the season is over, I am extremely sad because it has been so much fun thanks to my teammates and coaches. I can’t wait till next year to hopefully continue to improve and have even more success.”

As for Dover, the Louisburg senior went into his final state meet with a few less nerves than last season. That experience seemed to pay off for Dover as he finished eighth overall in the discus with a throw of 143-4.



T.J. Dover finished eighth in the discus Friday at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships in Wichita.

"I wouldn't say I am satisfied with it because I really wanted to hit a PR, but a state medal is something I have been chasing since last year when I kind of choked at state," Dover said. "It has been in the back of my mind all year, but I am blessed to come out here and have the opportunity to compete, especially with this only being my second year of track. I feel a lot of pride to be able to represent Louisburg on the podium."

Dover threw in the first flight of the competition and recorded a throw of 141-6 in his final attempt. Then he had to sit and wait for the second flight to throw.

He continued to watch as a few of those throwers hadn't surpassed his best mark, which gave him hope he was able to

make the finals. Dover ended up with the seventh-best throw in the two flights and made it in.

“It was super nerve-racking,” he said. “I honestly didn’t think I got in until they said my name.

“For the circumstances, I thought I threw pretty well. The ring was pretty slick and I struggled to keep my balance. Toward the end of the throws, I started to realize I needed to make a move to try and get in the finals. It feels good to finally get a medal.”



Senior Ben Hupp runs down the straightaway during the final leg of the 4×800-meter relay Saturday in Wichita.

Louisburg just missed out on getting more state medals in two events.

On Friday, sophomore Chris Williams finished ninth in the 400-

meter dash in 51.98 seconds and missed getting into the finals by one spot.

The 4×800-meter relay of Williams, Wyatt Reece, Tanner Belcher and Ben Hupp did the same on Saturday. The relay ran in the top eight through the first two laps of the race, but couldn't hold their spot and took ninth in 8 minutes and 31.23 seconds.

Junior Kaitlyn Urban finished a couple spots out of the finals as she recorded a leap of 33-1 in the triple jump and finished 11th overall.

A week after winning a regional title, junior Quinn Rigney ran a time of 11.47 seconds in the 100-meter dash to come in 12th at state and fellow junior Frankie Hurst cleared 11-6 in the pole vault to take 13th.



Senior Kaitlyn Gaza hands the baton off to teammate Kaitlyn Urban Friday during the 4×100-meter relay.

The boys 4×400 relay team of Williams, Blue Caplinger, Hupp and Rigney took 12th in 3:30.33, while the girls 4×100 relay of Kaitlyn Gaza, Urban, Haley Cain and Jordon Leach was 13th in 52.99 seconds.

Jackson Ewalt, Caplinger, Charlie Koontz and Rigney finished 16th in the boys 4×100 relay in 45.45 seconds to round out the Louisburg state qualifiers.