

Fall sports season kicks off with first day of practice



Louisburg senior Kris Light goes through a drill during the first day of soccer practice Monday. All four Wildcat teams got their season started with workouts on Monday as the fall sports season kicks off.

Summer time and vacations are coming to an end just in time for fall sports to heat up as four Louisburg High School teams had their first day of practice Monday.

The Wildcat cross country, football, soccer and volleyball teams got the 2017 season kicked off right with either two-a-days or tryouts. Each program also had strong numbers out as they either increased or stayed the same from the year before.

All four Louisburg teams experienced success last season and they hope it carries over into this year.

Louisburg soccer made program history as the Wildcats advanced to the state semifinals for the first time. Cross country also had a big season as it qualified three for the state meet.

Football is coming off a regional championship, while the volleyball team was one victory away from reaching the state tournament.

Louisburg had a lot of positives going its way in 2016, but all four coaches realize it is time to start anew.

The Wildcat football team opened practice with approximately 60 players out as they start two-a-days for the rest of this week under first-year coach Robert Ebenstein. The players will practice in helmets and shoulder pads through Thursday and full pads Friday. They will conclude the week with a scrimmage Saturday morning.



Louisburg junior Austin Moore and the rest of the Wildcat football team begin two-a-day practices this week.

Louisburg, which finished with eight wins last season, is hoping build on that success.

“I thought practice went well,” Ebenstein said. “The guys and coaches were excited to get going and the guys brought a ton of enthusiasm and had a great first day of practice.”

The Wildcat soccer team saw a big jump in numbers as they had 45 players sign up to play this season and the team will be

going through tryouts through Wednesday.

Practice opened at the track as the players ran the mile at 7 a.m. Monday, watched a concussion video in the afternoon and hit the practice field for the first time shortly after. The Wildcats are hard at work under second-year coach Kyle Conley, making sure they use the momentum they created after their fourth place finish at state last season.

“I know for the boys and coaches it is fantastic to get back to the field,” Conley said. “We are very excited and anxious to prove last year was not a fluke. We will have to work even harder than we did last year, because we will not be able to fly under the radar. The boys are ready for that challenge and I think they are going to give it their all to see how this journey transpires. The boys are focused and determined. I am really excited to also see what this group can achieve as a team.”



Sophomore Trinity Moore is one of three returning state qualifiers for the Louisburg cross country team.

The cross country team also has high expectations for itself as the Wildcats return three state qualifiers in seniors Wyatt Reece, Tim Smith and sophomore Trinity Moore. Moore garnered a state medal after finishing 19th as a freshman at the Class 4A meet and became the first female runner in Louisburg history to earn a state honor.

Runners hit the streets around town on Monday for a 30-minute workout to begin to build their base for the season and will progress as the season goes along. Head coach John Reece has 35 runners out this season, which is close to last year's number, as the Wildcats prepare for what they hope is a special season.

"My summer crew of runners are excited to get going, some even started altering their summer runs on their own to start preparing for the season," coach Reece said. "We are working on duration runs vs. miles. Instead of going for a 5-mile run, I will have them run for a minimum of say 45 minutes and allow some to extend up to 60 minutes of training, which some runners could reach close to eight miles within the hour. Our non-duration days will be focused on speed and lots of repeats with active recovery. There will be no walking for us."

The Lady Cat volleyball team felt out of place at the end of last season. Louisburg's year ended sooner than it would have liked after losing in the substate championship game and didn't qualify for state for the first time in five years.



Louisburg senior Sophie McMullen goes through a drill during the first day of tryouts Monday at Louisburg High School.

Louisburg is hard at work in hopes of earning a state tournament bid. Head coach Jessica Compliment has 35 players out this season, and after two more days of tryouts, will get practice in full swing.

The Lady Cats open their season at home on Aug. 26 when they host the Frontier League preseason tournament and the junior varsity will compete in Paola. All three teams will play again at home on Aug. 29 against Blue Valley Southwest.

“The coaching staff is excited to get the season started and begin preparing for the preseason league tournament for varsity and junior varsity,” Compliment said. “We are looking forward to a lot of home matches this season and the athletes were ready to start tryouts and get the season kicked off.”