

Wildcats bring home multiple medals from state cross country



Louisburg senior Tim Smith, sophomore Trinity Moore and senior Wyatt Reece each earned a state medal Saturday during the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships in Wamego.

WAMEGO – This season has provided a lot of firsts for the Louisburg High School cross country team, so it wouldn't have been complete had the Wildcats not accomplished another feat in program history in what was their final race.

Louisburg runners braved the near-freezing temperatures Saturday during the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships at the Wamego Country Club and left with multiple state medalists.

Sophomore Trinity Moore, along with seniors Wyatt Reece and Tim Smith, all earned state medals and the Wildcats had multiple medalists for the first time in the program's 19 years.

"It was awesome and emotional to see Wyatt, Tim and Trinity bring home medals," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "It was another first for the program as we have had only one medalist prior Trinity's medal last year. It shows the culmination of lots of hard work and to see that the practice plan set out

from the start worked for the runners.”

Moore picked a good time to have the best race of her career. After she medaled 19th overall as freshman last season, Moore ran a personal best time of 19 minutes and 47 seconds to break her own school record and finished fifth in the state.

“Honestly, finishing top five was unexpected, but it felt amazing,” Moore said. “I was feeling good last week in practice and I figured if I could break 20 (minutes), I could possibly finish in the top 10. It was the first time I ran in cold temperatures and I didn’t know what to expect. As soon as the race started I got into a good position, I settled in good and just kept working.”



Trinity Moore works her way down a hill during the Class 4A state meet Saturday in Wamego. Moore finished fifth overall.

The Louisburg sophomore got off to a good start in what was a fast paced girls race. Moore stayed toward the front of the pack, and at the two mile mark, started to make her move.

“Trinity is a gutsy runner,” coach Reece said. “To see her do what she did this year is no surprise. She has begun to learn how to race the 5K, and with her competitive drive she is – and will be – a force to be reckoned with the next two years. Our league will pose all of the competition needed to continue to push her to the limit and beyond. The next two years will be fun.”

Wyatt Reece and Smith both came into the state meet after missing out on a state medal the year before. This was Reece’s third appearance on the state cross country stage and Smith’s second.

Both runners got what they were looking for in their final high school race. Reece finished 11th overall with a time of 17:00 and Smith, who won the regional title last week in Burlington, came in 15th in 17:05.

Reece and Smith had to deal with a fast start to the boys race as Reece stayed in front of the field, while Smith was in the middle of the pack that featured 105 runners. The crowded start made for some obstacles to begin the race.



Wyatt Reece stays ahead of a group of runners Saturday. Reece medaled 11th overall.

"I'm super excited about my medal and I felt my race went well overall," Wyatt said. "I started in about 12th place and I floated there the whole race. There was a lot of bumping in the first mile, but 'if you ain't rubbing, you ain't racing.'"

The cold weather affected Smith throughout the race as he stayed in the middle of the field through the first mile, but he made his move in the last mile to work himself into medal contention.

"It feels great having a state medal, just knowing that I worked for it," Smith said. "My goal at the beginning of the year was for me and Wyatt to bring home one of those medals. I feel like we both ran amazing."

"I was struggling the whole race because of the weather, but I just kept saying in my head that this is my last race and my last shot. If I don't give it everything I have then I will regret it for the rest of my life. That first mile I was well back in the top 50 range, so I really had to work to get up to where I needed to be. By the last mile, I was relying on my coaches to tell me what place I was in."



Louisburg senior Tim Smith works his way through the field Saturday in Wamego. Smith took 15th overall.

Saturday also marked the first time a full Louisburg girls team competed in a state meet. The Lady Cats finished 10th in the team standings with 225 points.

Along with Moore's fifth place finish, sophomore Carlee Gassman took 53rd overall in 21:42 and junior Kaitlyn Lewer was next on the team in 75th in 22:27.

Senior Isabelle Holtzen (23:11), senior Reilly Alexander (23:28), junior Payton Shaffer (23:34) and sophomore Emily Williams (24:42) finished 88th, 96th, 98th and 101st, respectively.



The Louisville High School girls cross country team poses for a picture prior to their state race.

"To qualify a girls team after 19 years of trying was amazing," coach Reece said. "They all worked so hard during the season, and the team medals they won and just missed out on, showed their determination and drive. We laid out before them what our regional was going to be like and what they needed to do to get to state and they did it. Then they went to state and ran much faster than our first trip to Wamego earlier in the year.

“Once again they put forth their best effort and beat a team that beat us at regionals. We could not be prouder of these ladies, including the alternates, as they took on the challenge and accomplished it with hard work and a team spirit that lasted all season.”