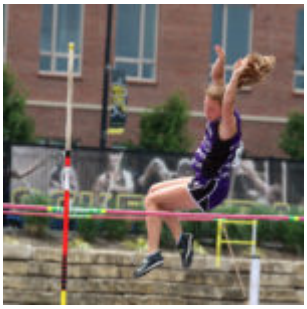
Wildcat track has same goals under new leadership



Louisburg senior Isabelle Holtzen hopes to get back to the state meet this season after she finished seventh in the pole vault last year in Wichita. Holtzen is the lone returning state medalist for Louisburg.

The Louisburg High School track and field teams will have a little different look to them this season.

Both the girls and boys programs are under different leadership in 2018 for the first time in several years. Former assistant John Reece is the new girls head coach after he replaced Greg Darrington, who resigned after last season.

Andy Wright will take over the boys program after he replaced longtime coach Gary Griffin, who retired after more than two decades on the Wildcat coaching staff. Wright was an also assistant for the Wildcats last season.

Still, despite the new leadership across the program, Louisburg still has the same goals in front of them – qualifying for as many events at the state meet as possible.

The Louisburg girls return a few state qualifiers from a season ago, which includes their lone medalist in Isabelle Holtzen. The Wildcat senior medaled seventh in the pole vault at state last year and she hopes for another trip to the medal

stand this year.

“Practice is going great so far with the nice weather,” Reece said. “I am very excited about taking over the program and moving forward with it. We currently have 28 girls out for the team and are returning several varsity athletes as well as state qualifiers.

“Isabelle is our returning state medalist and I hope to see her improve upon last year’s marks as well as helping us out on the track even more. After some time trials and throw offs, we are pretty evenly spread out between the track and field so we can score points in both areas.”

Senior Kaitlyn Urban returns to lead the Lady Cat jumpers after she qualified for state in the triple jump last season. Fellow seniors Lexie Reece (throws) and Mikayla Quinn (mid-distance, relays) will also look to score points this year, along with Holtzen, who will compete in the sprints as well as the pole vault.



Senior Kaitlyn Urban hopes to make another return trip to state in the triple jump.

“They bring many years of experience to the program and will be looked upon to lead the team,” Reece said of his seniors. “We hope to improve as a team in placings at the meets we attend this year and move up in league standings. We have an awesome group of both girls and boys and an outstanding coaching staff.”

Juniors Kristen Bell, Eileen Benne, Jordon Leach, Melia Rice, Payton Shaffer and Shaylor Whitham also hope to have a big year for the Wildcats. Leach helped the Wildcats to a state appearance last season in the 4×100-meter relay.

Sophomores Carlee Gassman, Avery Graham, Sydni Keagle and Kody Lowry will also look to score points for Louisburg. Graham (pole vault) and Keagle (hurdles) made strides for the Lady Cats last season and hope to take another step forward.



Junior Chris Williams will try for another trip to the state meet in the 400-meter dash.

On the boys side, the Wildcats return several athletes on the track, including junior Chris Williams, who just missed out on a state medal after he finished ninth in the 400-meter dash as a sophomore. Williams will try for that medal again as he competes in the 400 and 800-meter dash this season.

Williams is one of 38 Wildcat boys out this season and will be joined by a few seniors in leading the team. Senior Wyatt Reece, a returning state qualifier in the 4×800 relay and state medalist this season in cross country, will run distance and hopes to earn another berth to state.

Another senior, Frankie Hurst, returns after qualifying for state in the pole vault last season, and he will be joined by sophomore Trent Martin as both look to take another step forward.

“Practices have been going really good,” Wright said. “The boys have been working hard and it should be a good year. Individually, we should have some success in most running events.”



Senior Wyatt Reece will lead the Wildcat distance runners this season.

Louisburg gained some speed on the track as junior Brandon Cooper returns after a year at Blue Valley Northwest, where he was a state qualifier in the 100 dash and the 4×100 relay. He will run 100 and 200-meter dashes, and will help the 4×100 relay team.

The Wildcats will run a pair of relays this season. Sophomore Charlie Koontz, junior Blue Caplinger, freshman Ben Wiedenmann and Cooper will start the season on the 4×100 team, while Caplinger, sophomore Michael Waldron, Wiedenmann and Williams

will run the 4×400 relay.

Louisburg opens its season at 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday when it competes in the Leavenworth Invitational at Leavenworth High School. The Wildcats will compete again Friday at another meet in Belton, Mo.