

Wildcats bring home hardware from state powerlifting meet



Louisburg High School powerlifters (from left) Eli Minster, Brian Houck, Kiefer Tucker, Ben Minster, Tanner Belcher, Dylan Knipp, Avery Graham, Reilly Ratliff-Becher and Izzie Ford each set personal bests during the Class 4A state powerlifting meet March 10 at Clay Center High School.

It has been several years since Louisburg High School sent a team to a state powerlifting competition, but that all changed on March 10.

Led by weightlifting coach Ty Pfannenstiel, he took a group of nine LHS students to Clay Center High School for the 2018 Class 4A state powerlifting meet and the Wildcat lifters brought home a lot of hardware back with them.

Many of the competitors earned a medal, either in a specific event, or if they finished in the top three of their specific weight class.

Avery Graham, Reilly Ratliff-Becher, Izzie Ford, Dylan Knipp, Tanner Belcher, Eli Minster, Brian Houck, Ben Minster and Kiefer Tucker all made the trip to Clay Center and coach Pfannenstiel couldn't have asked for more from his first time group.

"I thought our kids did great," he said. "Every kid that we

took finished in the top 10 in their respective weight class. The top three kids medal in each event and overall, so for us to come home with that many medals was really impressive. Even though not everyone brought home some hardware, each athlete had a personal record.

“This sport is a lot like track where you are pretty much competing against yourself to beat your previous best, so for our kids to set some PR’s in that kind of environment was very impressive. I was very proud of our athletes.”

Ratliff-Becher had a big day in the girls division as she medaled in all three of her individual events in the 180-pound weight class. The Louisburg sophomore took second in the bench press with 135 pounds.

She also had a 140-pound clean that was good for second and had a 240-pound squat that took third. She finished second overall with a total of 515 pounds.



Reilly Ratliff-Becher attempts a squat lift while she is spotted by teammate Izzie Ford during the Class 4A state meet.

Ford, a senior, was third overall in the same weight class as she totaled 435 pounds. She also medaled third with a 105-pound bench.

Graham, a sophomore, totaled 435 pounds in the 148-pound weight class to take eighth overall.

On the boys side, Tucker had a big day as he brought home three medals. He totaled 1,030 pounds in the 220-pound weight class to finish third.

Tucker finished first with a 465-pound squat and also finished third in the bench press with a 315-pound attempt.

Knipp had a total lift of 755 pounds in the 148-pound class to take third overall. He also took first in the bench press with

a lift of 245 pounds.



Junior Kiefer Tucker records an attempt in the bench press after he finished third overall in his weight class.

Houck competed in the 181-pound division and brought home a pair of medals. He finished first with a 445-pound squat and his three events totaled 910 pounds, which was good for third overall.

Belcher earned a lone medal in the bench press with an attempt of 225 pounds at 148-pounds, which was good for third place. He took seventh overall with 690 total pounds.

Ben Minster (198 pounds) and Eli Minster (173 pounds) took seventh and 10th overall, respectively. Ben totaled 860 pounds

to take seventh overall and Eli recorded 765 pounds to finish 10th.

“I think they all surprised me a little,” Pfannestiel said. “I knew we had a couple of kids that would do really well, but to see us have that many kids place was impressive. There were over 300 athletes at this meet, so for our nine athletes to perform that well was awesome.”

In the team standings, the Louisburg girls finished sixth overall with 14 points, while Basehor-Linwood won the state title with 97 points. McPherson finished second with 56 and Scott City was third with 47.

The Louisburg boys finished eighth overall with 18 points. Basehor-Linwood won the team title with 80 points, while Buhler was second (54) and Scott City was third (40).



Dylan Knipp attempts a squat lift on March 10 at Clay Center High School during the Class 4A meet. Knipp was third overall in his weight class.

Since this was their first time, Pfannenstiel and his athletes weren't sure what to expect from the state meet, but he is excited for the results and hopes he can take an even bigger group next year.

"This is not a KSHSAA sanctioned sport, so there is no qualification, regional, or sub state that takes place," Pfannenstiel said. "Anyone that is in high school is eligible. I just asked kids in class that I thought would be interested and they were all very receptive. I think a lot of kids were nervous to go because it sounds very intimidating. But I do

know that all nine athletes that went really enjoyed the experience. I was very proud of our kids. They represented Louisburg well.

“We will take more athletes next year. This is definitely a sport where strength in numbers is the key. If we can fill out all of the weight classes, I think we can finish in the top three next year. The kids really liked it, so I think they will help recruit some more kids and our numbers will grow.”