

Gassman earns state runner-up; 'Cats bring home 6 state medals



Louisburg sophomore Carlee Gassman clears a hurdle during the preliminaries of the 300-meter hurdles Friday at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championship in Wichita. Gassman finished second overall with a new school record time.

WICHITA – Carlee Gassman has broken the Louisburg High School 300-meter hurdle record three different times this season prior to last weekend's state track meet.

She picked the perfect time to make it a fourth.

Gassman broke her own school record in the 300 hurdles Saturday at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships in Wichita as she ran a time of 45.68 seconds to earn a silver medal as she was the Wildcats' top performer on the weekend. Andale's Abby Smarsh, who is a senior, won the event in 44.73.

It was the Louisburg sophomore's first time competing at the Kansas meet as she transferred in from Iowa last year, where she qualified for the state meet there in the 400 hurdles.

"It meant a lot to me when I broke the record again," Gassman said. "It gives me confidence that I can keep improving. I was

so happy about the second place medal. To come from Iowa, where everything's a lot different and to take on a challenge and to come out successful means a lot to me."

Gassman's medal in the 300 hurdles was just one of six the Wildcats were able to bring home following the two-day meet. Those six medals were the most Louisburg has earned since 2011, when the Wildcats combined to medal in 10 events and the boys won their first team state title.

The 300 hurdles wasn't the only event Gassman found success in as she also medaled in the long jump. Gassman, who hadn't competed in the event prior to this year, finished fifth with a mark of 17 feet, 0.25 inches.

"That medal was very special to me," she said. "This is my first year long jumping and to come out that successful gives me hope that I can try anything. Obviously, I was very happy with it.

"This track meet gives me so much confidence for next year and the future. I have a dream and I can't wait to continue on this adventure."



Isabelle Holtzen successful clears a height in the pole vault Saturday during the state meet in Wichita. She finished sixth overall at 11 feet.

Senior Isabelle Holtzen finished out her high school pole vault career on a positive note as she medaled sixth overall in her final meet as she cleared 11 feet. Holtzen, who broke her own school record at 11-6 earlier in the season, faced some difficult competition.

Paola's Samantha Van Hoecke, who is one of the nation's top pole vaulters, won the event after clearing 12 feet and Marysville's Grace Stohs also cleared 12 feet to take second.

Holtzen's clearance of 11 feet would have won her a state title in four other classes and she also had a top 10 vault at the state meet. Her state medal was her second straight after she finished seventh a year ago.

"It is exciting," Holtzen said. "This is such a big meet and there is a lot of competition, especially on the 4A level. I think it is an honor to be able to stand on a podium with such a great group of kids who are some of the best vaulters in the nation. It is a little disappointing because I was hoping to get a PR, or maybe even tie my record and medal a little higher, but it is alright. It was a good year."



Louisburg junior Chris Williams sprints to the finish line in the 400-meter dash. Williams took eighth overall.

On the boys side, junior Chris Williams picked up a pair of medals after he ran a personal best in the 400-meter dash in the prelims on Friday that helped him qualify for the finals. Williams ran a time of 50.01 to take the last spot in the finals by just .02 seconds.

Williams officially earned his first state medal Saturday

after he finished eighth in the 400 meter finals Saturday with a time of 52.18.

For his second medal, he had some help to get that one as Williams, along with junior Blue Caplinger and freshman Ben Wiedenmann and Justin Collins also ran a personal best time in the preliminaries to qualify for the finals. The Wildcat quartet took the final spot in 3:26.49.



Junior Blue Caplinger hands the baton to teammate Justin Collins during the prelims of the 4×400-meter relay. The Wildcats took seventh overall.

Then in the final event of the day Saturday, the 4×400 team took to the track one more time and ran a 3:30.69 to finish in seventh.

The medalists continued in the boys pole vault as sophomore Trent Martin, in his first state meet action, left Wichita

with some hardware as he placed in the top eight.

Martin tied a season-best Friday by clearing 13 feet and finished in a tie for eighth, but won the tie-breaker based on the number of misses to take the final medal. Freshman teammate Luke Faulkner also competed for the Wildcats and took 13th overall after he cleared 12 feet.



Sophomore Trent Martin pumps his fist after he cleared 13 feet in the pole vault Friday at the state meet in Wichita.

"It was one of my best achievements in track and it meant a lot to me to be on the podium at state," Martin said. "The competition was pretty good this year at regionals and at state. It was a big relief to clear 13 feet again.

"I feel very good about next season and I think I will have an

even better chance at getting a higher place next year.”

Also on the track, Louisburg senior Wyatt Reece finished one spot out of a medal in the 3,200-meter run Friday morning. Reece ran a personal best time of 10:11 to take ninth overall.

Reece also competed in the 1,600 run on Saturday afternoon and finished 13th in 4:47.

In the girls triple jump, senior Kaitlyn Urban ended her Wildcat track career as she finished 14th with a mark of 31-6.25. Urban had a successful final year as she was the Frontier League champion in the event and also set a personal record of 34 feet at the regional meet two weeks ago.