

# Wildcats qualify for state in 9 events; relays set school records



Louisburg senior Chris Williams pumps his fists in the air after the Wildcat 4×400-meter relay won a regional championship and broke their own school record with a new time 3:23.76 on Friday during the Class 4A regional meet in Paola.

PAOLA – As Justin Collins, Blue Caplinger, Ben Wiedenmann and Chris Williams raced around the track in the 4×400-meter relay Friday at the Class 4A regional meet in Paola, they had only two thoughts in mind.

One was to qualify for state and the other was to hold on to that No. 1 state ranking.

The Wildcats did both of those things and then some. The Louisburg quartet easily won the regional championship as they broke their own school record with a time of 3 minutes and 23.76 seconds after setting it last week at the Frontier League meet.

“I think we ran pretty well,” Caplinger said. “We are looking forward to even tougher competition at state. I think we compete harder as the competition gets tougher and it was very

satisfying to know that we can run good times consistently.”

Louisburg currently has the best time in Class 4A heading into the state meet this weekend in Wichita.

“We are all pretty excited since we are No. 1 in the state instead of No. 8,” Williams said. “It is always a good thing to be at the top. At the same time, we are now the team to beat and we are who everyone wants to catch. It is going to be a fun race. It is going to be tough and we are going to do our best.”

It was a successful day for the Wildcat team as they qualified for state in nine events and will send 13 to Wichita this weekend. The end of the meet almost got even better for Louisburg as it was in the hunt for the regional runner-up trophy.

Louisburg finished with 82 points, but unfortunately they finished one point behind Eudora for second place in the team standings. Paola won the regional crown with 168 points.

Still, the Wildcats had a successful regional meet that led them to qualifying for state in nine events and are sending 13 athletes to Wichita in the process. The top four finishers in each event get to compete at the state meet.

Along with his regional title in the 4×400 relay, Williams, a senior, ran his best race of the season in the 400-meter dash in 51.44 seconds to win a regional championship.

“I thought I ran it pretty slow,

but down the final stretch I decided to just go for it since it was my last one and finally got below 52 seconds, which I had been struggling with all season,” Williams said. “It was good to get that good time.”

Louisburg’s 4×100-meter relay of Charlie Koontz, Caplinger, Wiedenmann and Collins ran their best time of the season Friday. After tying the school record the week before at the league meet, the four athletes now have it all to themselves as the Wildcats ran a 43.34 to finish second overall to Paola, who ran a 43.17.



**Blue Caplinger takes the handoff from Charlie Koontz in the boys 4×100 relay as the Wildcats set a new school record in 43.34.**

“It’s really awesome to get the record to ourselves,” Caplinger said. “It was nice since we’ve been working for that record for two years. If we make it to finals (at state), I think we’ll do very well.”

In the discus, senior Kiefer Tucker almost finished as a regional champion as he put together a strong round of throws to take second overall with a toss of 148 feet, 6 inches.

Tucker led going into finals of the competition, but in the second round of the finals, he was passed by Bishop Miege's Taylor Poitier with a 152-7.

"It feels to go out to state, especially with it being my senior year," Tucker said. "I am just glad I made it and it will be my first time going so it will be a new experience, but I am definitely excited for it.

"Going in, I was a little scared, but once I got my warm-up throws in I felt good and I knew it was going to be a good day. I'm just glad that I went out and competed and just got it."



**Senior Kiefer Tucker lets the discus fly Friday during the Class 4A regional meet in Paola. Tucker was second overall.**

The Wildcats also had six athletes that finished in either third or fourth place to earn a state bid.

Junior Michael Waldron will make his trip to state in the javelin as he took third overall with a throw of 154-9 in windy conditions. Waldron is excited for his first opportunity in Wichita after narrowly missing state a year ago.

"It feels great," Waldron said. "This is my first year going and last year I missed out on going to state by like a few feet, so it is a nice to be able to get there.

"It was actually good throwing into the wind, and I have actually had success this year doing that, so it was good and I'm looking forward to state."

Louisburg had a pair of pole vaulters qualify after both Trent Martin and Luke Faulkner both tied personal bests to finish third and fourth, respectively.

Martin cleared 13-6 for the second consecutive week, while Faulkner was fourth at 13-0. A lot of their competition was eliminated early on and knew they qualified shortly into the event, which made it a little less stressful.

"I felt really good today," Martin said. "It was nice when the four of us found out early in the competition that we had already qualified and that took a lot of the pressure off. It just let



us have fun.

“We are going to be putting in work this week and going for PR’s at state and we will just see what happens.”

It will be the second trip to state for both vaulters and Martin will try for his second state medal.

“I am just trying to go to state all four years and I have been successful so far,” Faulkner said. “There was great conditions and that helped with some of the high marks.

“It is fun having competition to go up against at practice with Trent. Everyone is slowing getting better and it makes the sport more fun.”



**Freshman Tom Koontz celebrates at the finish line as he finished third in the 300 hurdles and qualified for state.**

Louisburg got a pleasant surprise from freshman Tom Koontz in the 300 hurdles. Koontz ran a personal best time of 41.35 seconds to finish third overall and led to a celebration at the finish line.

The Wildcats also qualified a pair of distance runners as junior Anthony Davis and freshman Ryan Rogers finished third and fourth, respectively, in the 1,600-meter run. Davis ran a 5:00.48, while Rogers sprinted toward to the finish to edge Osawatomie's Bryce Filipin in 5:03.

In the sprints, senior Brandon Cooper was fourth in a difficult race in the 100-meter dash. Cooper ran a time of 11.22 to punch his ticket to state.

Events for state will begin at 3 p.m., Friday at Cessna Stadium on the campus of Wichita State University and the top eight in each events will earn state medals.

Other results:

100 dash: Justin Collins, 5<sup>th</sup>, 11.33; Blue Caplinger, 6<sup>th</sup>, 11.51

200 dash: Charlie Koontz, 10<sup>th</sup>, 23.85; Ben Wiedenmann, 11<sup>th</sup>, 23.95

800 run: Anthony Davis, 14<sup>th</sup>, 2:24; Ryan Rogers, 15<sup>th</sup>, 2:24

110 hurdles: Tom Koontz, 5<sup>th</sup>, 16.88

Long jump: Hayden Feikert, 7<sup>th</sup>,  
19-10; Will Finestead, 8<sup>th</sup>, 19-8.5; Weston Guetterman, 15<sup>th</sup>,  
16-10

Triple jump: Finestead, 5<sup>th</sup>,  
40-7.5; Isaac Guetterman, 10<sup>th</sup>, 39-5.25; Indy Strumillo, 13<sup>th</sup>,  
38-5.75

Shot put: Kiefer Tucker, 12<sup>th</sup>,  
42-9.5; Jonathan DePriest, 15<sup>th</sup>, 39-7.5

Discus: Carter Anglin, 8<sup>th</sup>,  
122-2

Javelin: Jay Scollin, 6<sup>th</sup>,  
148-7; Austin Moore, 7<sup>th</sup>, 142-10