

# Moore, Johnson ready to lead LHS cross country back to state



Louisburg senior Trinity Moore (right) will try for her fourth consecutive state medal this season and she hopes to lead the Lady Cat cross country team back to state for the third straight year.

It was an historic finish for the Louisburg cross country team last season and it is one many of the runners haven't forgotten.

For the second straight year, the Wildcat girls team qualified for the state meet, while Trinity Moore and Reese Johnson recorded top 10 finishes. It was the best postseason performance in program history.

Louisburg wants to take it to the next step in 2019.

Moore and Johnson are both returning to help the Louisburg girls as they are one of the top teams in the state. Kansas Milesplit recently ranked the Lady Cats as the fifth best team in Class 4A.

“Last year was awesome and we met and exceeded our goals,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “This year we look to better ourselves again and the girls’ work ethic shows it. We have several girls that will be challenging each other to be one of the top seven. The runners that are there at the end of the season will have earned it. We might not field a full seven runners for varsity races until later in the season as we are still working towards getting into racing form.

Moore and Johnson have two of those spots as they are two of the top returning runners in the state after their performance last season.

Moore, who is a senior, will be vying for her fourth consecutive state medal as she tries to improve on her fourth place finish at state a year ago.

“I am extremely excited for what this season has to bring for the team this year with new and young runners joining the team,” Moore said. “I am also excited for myself, and my senior season, to better my time and hopefully to make it to state with my team once again.

“This year I have many goals for myself. I want to push myself to get a faster time each race and possibly break a 19 minute 5K. Hopefully I can qualify for state again with my team and bring home a plaque this year.”



**Sophomore Reese Johnson is back to the Louisburg cross country team after finishing sixth at state last season as a freshman. Johnson will be pushing Moore all season as the Louisburg sophomore was on Moore's heels at the state meet a year ago and took sixth overall. Both runners helped the Lady Cats to a fifth place finish at the Class 4A meet in Wamego.**

Not only did the two runners push each other last year, but they have also been competing with each other at practice and in summer workouts. Both athletes hope all that competition will pay off as the season goes along.

"Reese and I have constantly been training with each other in workouts and long runs," Moore

said. "Training with each other has made us go faster and hard in practice by giving each of us someone to challenge the other. I think down the road it will help us to have faster times individually, but also help lead the team to state again."

Senior Carlee Gassman will also give Louisburg a nice boost on the girls side as the team's No. 3 runner, while freshman Bree Gassman and junior Kennady Wilkerson complete the top five runners.

"Trinity and Reese are both bringing it during workouts, along with Carlee, and are really pushing themselves," coach Reece said. "Trinity definitely put in the time over the summer and is ready to race. Carlee and Reese worked in their summer running when their schedule allowed and are not far behind Trin in the ready to race category.

"Cross country is such a mental sport and they can accomplish great things this season with the right mindset. Our new assistant coach, Paul Restivo, does a great job working with all the runners in promoting a positive mind set to help them prepare to compete."



**Seniors (from left) Anthony Davis and Evan Murphy, along with junior Cade Holtzen, return to lead the Louisburg boys team.** The Wildcats also return several runners on the boys side as well. Seniors Anthony Davis and Evan Murphy are back as the teams' top runners, along with juniors Cade Holtzen and Carson Houchen.

Ryan Rogers, Caden Bradshaw and Sawyer Richardson will also compete for the Wildcat varsity squad this season and Reece believes this group can do some good things as well.

“The boys are returning a lot of experience, along with some newcomers to the sport who have stepped in and are making positive gains within the team,” coach Reece said. “Anthony Davis is leading the group, but the other six runners are closing in and making progress. Much like the girls side there are a few right behind them that are going to push and make us

strong.”

Louisburg opens its season at 3:15 today when it travels to the Anderson County Invitational at the Garnett Country Club. It is also a special day as the Wildcat middle school program will compete in its first-ever race.

“Practice is going well,” Reece said. “It has been a change with middle school cross country starting and having 58 runners to work with and two coaches. The high school runners are ready to roll and their eyes are set on the last three meets and are working hard to do better than last year.”