

Lady Cats will head to state for third consecutive year



Louisburg senior Trinity Moore finished sixth overall to lead the Lady Cats to a third place team finish and a spot at the state meet in Wamego.

BALDWIN CITY – One by one, members of the Louisburg girls cross country team crossed the finish line and coach John Reece was unsure whether or not his team did enough to qualify for state.

The Lady Cats had made school history by qualifying the last two seasons, but the third time was a little bit in jeopardy – that was until the results were released.

As it turned out, Reece didn't need to be so worried.

Louisburg finished third overall with 96 points Saturday at the Class 4A regional meet at Baldwin Golf Course, and beat out Bishop Miege by six points to earn a spot at the state meet this weekend in Wamego.

The team of Trinity Moore, Carlee Gassman, Reese Johnson, Claire Brown, Ruth Minster, Kennady Wilkerson and Bree Gassman

will compete for the Lady Cats at state.

“This group of girls runs well, they race well and they train well together,” coach Reece said. “They are a good group and this is just as exciting as the other two times. The competition was a lot tougher than the previous two times. We had to run our races and we did. From our third to fifth runners was about an eight point spread. It was just incredible.”

Along with the team qualifying for state, Moore made some noise of her own as she finished sixth overall in to earn a regional medal in 20 minutes and 8 seconds. Piper freshman Grace Hanson won the individual crown at 19:15 and Eudora’s Riley Hiebert was second with a time of 19:24.

In the team standings, Eudora won the regional title with 47 points and Baldwin was second with 55.

“It means a lot to go to state three years in a row with my team,” Louisburg senior Trinity Moore said. “It shows that our hard work and goals for the season have paid off. It has showed me that we are capable of anything we set our minds to. Even with new runners on the team each year, it is so great to work together with these girls and lead such a great team.

“I feel like I ran very well. It was the best I had felt while racing this season in terms of weather and how I felt because of my training and competition throughout the

season. This year's race was more competitive compared to year's past, but I think that is what made it great."



(From left) Reese Johnson, Kennady Wilkerson, Claire Brown, Trinity Moore, Bree Gassman, Nova Ptacek, Ruth Minster, Carlee Gassman and coach John Reece were all smiles after their third place team finish.

Johnson, a sophomore for the Lady

Cats, finished 13th overall in 21 minutes to take second on the team. Gassman also battled through an injured ankle to take 21st in 21:29.

Brown, a freshman, also had a strong performance as she was the team's fourth runner and finished 25th in 22:06 and Minster, a sophomore, was fifth on the team in 23:39 and took 30th overall.

Wilkerson (24:10) and Bree Gassman (24:37) finished 43rd and 46th, respectively.

"I think they ran really well,"

coach Reece said. "I think if they go back and look at their times, they are close to PR's, if not better, and I think the boys were too. Trinity ran the race she needed to run and I think Reese stepped up for us to get second. Carlee gutted through having a bad ankle and Claire improved on her time and what an addition to the team she has been. Ruth also stepped up as our fifth runner, and she was our anchor and she got us there."



Sophomore Ruth Minster sprints to the finish line Saturday during the Class 4A regional at Baldwin Golf Course.

On the boys side, senior Anthony Davis missed out on a state bid by a few places as he finished 17th in 18:20 and the Wildcats were fifth as a team with 118 points.

Tonganoxie won the team title with 44 points and Bishop Miege was second with 73. Piper senior Owen Roellchen won the individual title in 16:57.

Sophomore Ryan Rogers was second on the Wildcat team with a time of 18:29 and was 20th overall and fellow sophomore Caden Bradshaw was 22nd in 18:32. Junior Carson Houchen was 25th in 18:44.



(From left) Ryan Rogers, Caden Bradshaw, Anthony Davis, Carson Houchen, Cade Holtzen, Sawyer Richardson and Evan Murphy line up for the start of the boys race Saturday in Baldwin City. Senior Evan Murphy (19:23), sophomore Sawyer Richardson (19:29) and junior Cade Holtzen (19:41) finished 35th,

36th and 40th, respectively.

The Louisburg girls will take to the course one final time at 12:30 p.m. this Saturday as the Lady Cats travel to Wamego for the state meet as they hope to better their fifth-place finish a season ago.

Moore, on the other hand, will try for her fourth state medal after finishing fourth in 2018. Johnson will vie for her second medal in as many years after taking sixth last season.

“To medal for the fourth time at state would be one of the best feelings in my heart,” Moore said. “It would be icing on the cake for my time as a cross country runner. It would show me that I can set a goal for myself and accomplish it, even through the toughest challenges. I never would have thought at the beginning of my freshman year that this could be a possibility, and to have gained so much in a sport.

“Not only is it my fourth time at state, but it is my last high school cross country race. I am definitely going to feel the emotions of it being my last time running there, but I know it will be a great day.”