

Wildcat boys, girls finish first at Wellsville Invite



The Louisburg boys and girls cross country teams both earned team titles last Thursday at the Wellsville Invitational. Members of the team are (front row, from left) Braden Branine, Caden Bradshaw, Hayden Ross, Sawyer Richardson, Carson Houchen, Cade Holtzen, Noah Cotter; (back row) Nova Ptacek, Lola Edwards, Reese Johnson, Claire Brown, Bree Gassman, Erin Apple and Maddie Rhamy.

WELLSVILLE – Less than a week after performing well on one of the toughest courses in the state, the Louisburg cross country teams continued their momentum Thursday at the Wellsville Invitational.

Both Wildcat teams brought home top honors as they both finished first in the team standings and garnered 12 individual medals. It was a memorable day all-around for the Louisburg runners.

“Any time a team is successful it is a good feeling,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “When both win the meet, and with the margin of the boys win being so small, it makes you feel great. It shows the effort that the runners are giving both individually, and as a team, to support each other’s effort.”

The Louisburg boys found themselves in a battle for the top spot with West Franklin. The Wildcats recorded 46 points and edged West Franklin by just one point without one of their top

runners in the lineup.

Junior Ryan Rogers was unable to run last Thursday, but his Wildcats teammates picked up the slack as seniors Carson Houchen and Cade Holtzen earned top 10 finishes. Houchen took fifth overall in 18 minutes and 49 seconds and Holtzen was ninth in 19:08.

Junior Caden Bradshaw also earned a medal for the Wildcats as he took 13th in 19:46. Two more runners, junior Hayden Ross (20:00) and freshman Noah Cotter (20:02), also medaled as they took 15th and 16th, respectively.



Junior Hayden Ross (left) and freshman Noah Cotter sprint to the finish Thursday at Wellsville.

Sawyer Richardson came in 30th in 21:04 and Braden Branine was 34th in 21:39 to round out the Wildcat runners.

“Carson and Cade are great senior leaders,” Reece said. “At

the meet they led by example and the others followed. With Ryan not running, we really had to step up with our 3,4 and 5 runners and they did. With every runner counting and as close as the score was, our No. 6 would have won the meet for us if it was a tie breaker.”

The Louisburg girls had a strong performance of their own as the Lady Cats recorded 25 points to win the team title over Santa Fe Trail, which had 43 points.

Freshman Lola Edwards continued her strong season as she won the individual crown going away in 21:02. Junior Reese Johnson was right behind her as she finished second overall in 21:43.

All seven Lady Cat runners came away with individual medals. Sophomore Claire Brown was third on the team in seventh overall in 23:24.

Sophomore Bree Gassman (23:51) and freshman Maddie Rhamy (23:55) took 11th and 12th, respectively. Another freshman, Erin Apple, was 17th in 24:46 and sophomore Nova Ptacek took 22nd in 25:39.



Louisburg coach John Reece urges on freshman Maddie Rhamy on Thursday at Wellsville.

“It was nice to see them (Lola and Reese) running up front, especially with a short week after running at Wamego on the Saturday before,” Reece said. “The girls group is doing a great job of pushing each other in meets and working together in practice.”

The Wamego course featured several hills and obstacles to overcome, but the Wellsville was vastly different and took a little bit for the Wildcat runners to get used to.

“Wellsville is not a hilly course but it has a million turns on it which makes it hard to get a long stretch to get into a good rhythm,” Reece said.

Louisburg will look to continue its success this Thursday when the Wildcats compete at the Prairie View Invitational. Races are set to begin at 3:30 p.m.