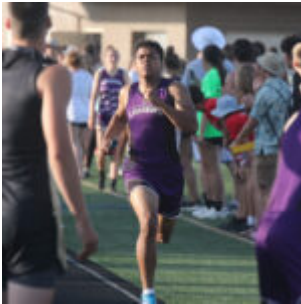


# Wildcat track has state aspirations after missing last season



*Louisburg senior Ben Wiedenmann is one of two returning members from the 2019 state 4×400-meter relay state championship team, along with fellow senior Justin Collins.*

The 2019 track and field season couldn't have ended on a better note for Louisburg.

In the regional meet in late May, the Wildcats qualified for state in 19 events between the boys and girls teams and also set six school records at the same time.

All that led up to a successful state meet where the Wildcats finished with multiple medalists and a state championship in the boys 4×400-meter relay.

Louisburg had built up a lot of momentum for the 2020 season, only to have it taken away due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, the Wildcats return several athletes from that special 2019 campaign and are looking forward to what 2021 has in store.

“With missing last year's season, it is difficult to say how the team will look,” Louisburg boys coach Andy Wright said. “It might take a couple of track meets to get back where they were two seasons ago. Practice has been going very well. We have good senior leadership and they have been setting the

tone at practices.”

On the boys side, the Wildcats return half of that state championship 4×400 team in seniors Ben Wiedenmann and Justin Collins as the sprinters are a strength of the team.

Both Wiedenmann and Collins figure to be the Wildcats’ top runners in the 100, 200 and 400-meter dashes. Sophomore Ethan Ptacek (400), junior Hayden Feikert (100) and freshman Hunter Heinrich (200, 400) all figure to be in the mix as well.

Ptacek, Heinrich and junior Tom Koontz are also battling for the final two spots in the 4×400 to join Collins and Wiedenmann. The same runners will also make up the 4×100 relay as well.

Louisburg will also put together a 4×800 relay as seniors Carson Houchen, Cade Holtzen and juniors Hayden Ross and Jaden Vohs will try to make a run at state as well. The Wildcats also return a state qualifier in Ryan Rogers in the 1,600-meter run.

“We are still going to be strong in the 4×400,” Wright said. “We will mix and match the beginning of the season and find the four that will run together later in the year.

“The 4×100 will still be competitive and I think the sprints are going to be our strength. But I am excited because we have enough long distance runners to have a 4×800 team this year and I am looking forward to seeing what this group can do together.”



***Louisburg senior Luke Faulkner will try and improve on his fourth place state finish two years ago.***

The Wildcats also return a state medalist in the pole vault in Luke Faulkner. The Louisburg senior finished fourth at state as a sophomore and is looking for even bigger things this year.

“Luke is one of the best vaulters in the state,” Wright said. “After a few meets and nice days of practices, he should surpass from where he was his sophomore season.”

Koontz is also a returning state qualifier in the 300-meter hurdles for Louisburg and he will look to qualify in both the 110 and 300 hurdles this season. Sophomore Mason Dobbins will be pushing Koontz throughout the year, as both will look to score a lot of points throughout the year.

In the jumps, Feikert and Will Finestead just missed out at

the state meet two years ago in the long and triple jumps, respectively, and both have their eyes on a state berth this season.

Senior Jay Scollin has the same goal in the javelin as he finished sixth at regionals as a sophomore.



***Louisburg junior Delaney Wright recorded four medals at the state meet two years ago, and is looking to improve on those marks this season.***

## **GIRLS**

Delaney Wright was considered one of the top track athletes in Class 4A a season ago after she earned four medals at the state meet in 2019.

She did all that as a freshman.

Now as junior, Wright will look to continue to make strides as she has her eyes on a state title in multiple events.

Wright will compete in all three sprints – 100, 200 and 400 – along with the long jump. She finished fourth in the 400 at state in 2019, and went on to take seventh in the 200 and eighth in the long jump.

“Delaney will be very competitive this year,” Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. “She really did not miss a season as she has continued to do track work since last year and looks to be stronger in her individual events. It will be fun to watch her progress this season.”



***Alyse Moore took fourth at state in the javelin as a sophomore as she will try for a state title in her senior season.***

Another Lady Cat who figures to be in the mix for a state title is Alyse Moore. The Louisburg senior finished fourth at state in the javelin as a sophomore after splitting time between softball and track.

Now that track is her main focus, Moore will look to take the next step in the javelin, along with throwing the discus and shot put.

“Alyse will pick up where she left off from two seasons ago and be a top thrower in the javelin,” Reece said. “Also look for her to pick up the shot and disc from time to time where I see her becoming very competitive as we go through the season. I think we will see some shoulders drop from other schools when she leaves the javelin runway to throw in the ring.”

Also in the throws, seniors Sydney Thornton and Lexi Rogers will compete in the javelin, while senior Aiyana Penca and junior Rinny McMullen will throw the discus.

Numbers are down for the Louisburg girls this season, but Reece is looking forward to seeing what he can get from some of his younger athletes.

“We are few in numbers with four girls sports in the spring,” Reece said. “We have a strong throwing group that will be competitive in meets and intrasquad as well. To be a top three and compete at varsity meets, it will be a constant competition amongst the girls.

“We only have two distance runners, Erin (Apple) and Alexis (French) who will make great individual gains this season and hopefully sneak a few points for us. Delaney and Emma Vohs will score points in the sprints in most meets and being a junior and freshman, they will be working together for a couple of years.”