

“What a state championship means to me...”



So much went into the Louisburg boys earning the Class 4A state track and field championship last week as the Wildcats medaled in 12 of the 18 events.

Whether it was the sprints, hurdles, distance, relays or field events, the Wildcats needed them all to come together to win the state's top prize.

Winning meant a lot to all the athletes and coaches, so I asked many of them what this whole experience meant to them and I got many different answers.

“It was a great way to close out such a difficult year. There may never be another year like this one. I know how much it means to these kids to leave their mark forever on their community with a state championship. I’m very proud at how they handled adversity throughout not only the season, but the entire school year. They are great group of kids and I just feel blessed that I could be a part of it all. It’ll be a year to remember and it’s all because of their hard work and dedication.” – **Alex Gentges, assistant coach**

“Winning state was a long term goal of mine and many other guys in the track team. At the beginning of the season we didn’t know where we would be at due to losing the 2019-2020 season, but everyone did their part to contribute to the several meet first place finishes and state championship.” – **Ben Wiedenmann, senior**



Louisburg seniors (from left) Cade Holtzen, Carson Houchen, Ben Wiedenmann, Justin Collins, Luke Faulkner and Jay Scollin.

“This was pretty special for me. I’ve been coaching for 20 years. This is my first state title since I was a lowly sophomore, who didn’t even play, on a state championship football team with Lawrence High. This is my only state title, and may possibly be my only, as a coach. I didn’t even have a boy place at state this year, but I know that there is so much that we all did to help this team accomplish what they did. Watching all of the hard work that all of these kids did to push each other to be the best was amazing.

“Two things sticks out in my mind. The week of regionals I stopped by the track on the way home and watched a little pole vault practice. Caden Caplinger made a vault and Luke Faulkner was yelling and screaming with excitement that Caden did some sort of technique correctly. He was genuinely happy for others successes. Jay Scollin just finished his last throw as a senior for Louisburg High and he stayed and watched the

sophomore that he had been working so closely with go from 8th place to 4th with one throw. He was one of the loudest supporters of his teammates that just threw further than him. Watching athletes that had graduated come back and cheer on other throwers makes you know how important it is to everyone that has been involved with Louisburg sports. It is a family that I am blessed to be a part of and it will be a year that I will likely never forget.” – **Pete Skakal, assistant coach**



Coaches (from left) Alex Gentges, Pete Skakal, Andy Wright, John Reece and Leanna Willer.

“Winning state meant the absolute world to me. In my four years of high school, running has undoubtedly been the highlight of my experience, and finishing off my senior year with a state ring is just about the best way I could ever hope to end high school athletics.” – **Carson Houchen, senior**

“The interesting thing is that I don’t believe it was even on their radar! The boys prepared themselves to compete at state and to do ‘their’ best. Because of their work/competition

ethic, they were going to bring it no matter what. By having that mindset, they all performed to their utmost. I have always said control what you can and positive things will follow and it did. This championship had even more emotion as we had a dog in the fight in the 4×4 and they did their job for their teammates. It was an awesome experience and one that will not soon be forgotten as we scored in all aspects of both track and field. I'll guess I'll have to stick around for another 10 years to see if it happens again." – **John Reece, distance coach and head girls coach.**

"Winning a team state championship has been everything I've hoped for. I've never done team sports, so the feeling of winning something as a team means everything." – **Cade Holtzen, senior**

"There are no words to describe how incredibly proud I was of the entire team. It was a total team effort! It was a moment I will never forget as a coach, and how exciting that it came down to the final race. Everyone gave it their all, and just couldn't happier as a coach to see all of that hard work pay off for them with the greatest reward." – **Andy Wright, head boys coach**



“It meant a lot to be apart of a state championship team. We all put in so much hard work at practice and it’s great to see it pay off.” – **Mason Dobbins, sophomore**

“It was a pretty surreal moment for me. I knew we had a shot at the title, but watching those boys compete event after event to earn each point was something pretty incredible to watch. These seniors were a special group, and I’m so proud of them for finishing their high school careers off with such an amazing accomplishment. I was definitely the emotional one of the group as it brought tears to my eyes to see the entire team together and so proud of each other after a long day of competing.” – **Leanna Willer, assistant coach**

“Winning the team state championship was amazing because we were ranked second or third and we thought we still had to fight for those places. Over time during the meet we kept crawling up to first in points and started to surprise ourselves at what we could accomplish.” – **Luke Faulkner, senior**

“It was an amazing feeling winning something this big for Louisburg, especially when Andale was supposed to win and then having it come down to the last race made it even better. I felt a lot of pride when we got on the podium in the number one spot. As a sophomore it felt really good to actually earn points for the team.” – **Nathan Vincent, sophomore**



“Winning state as a team was amazing. I couldn’t have asked for a better team to go in with and take a state championship.” – **Justin Collins, senior**

“It’s exciting to be a part of school history. Taking first place at state is quite an accomplishment. As a team, from our first practice, that was our No. 1 goal. I’m happy to be a part of such an athletic team.” – **Jaden Vohs, junior**

“To win state was absolutely astonishing, and it was a dream

come true because I knew I would be making my mark on the school and on the town. It meant everything that I did to prepare was worth it." – ***Tom Koontz, junior***