

Wildcats take third at state track, medal in 10 events



Members of the Louisburg boys track and field team are (front row, from left) coaches John Reece and Andy Wright, Ethan Ptacek, Caden Caplinger, Jerynce Brings Plenty, Hunter Heinrich, Jaden Vohs, Tom Koontz, Hayden Ross, assistant coaches Shelby Suther and Alex Gentges; (back row) Mason Dobbins, Colyer Wingfield, Nathan Vincent, Cooper Hipp, Nathan Apple and assistant coach Rich Lane.

WICHITA – For the second consecutive season, the Louisburg boys track and field team brought home hardware from the Class 4A state meet.

After winning the state championship in 2021, the Wildcats once again found their way to the podium in Wichita as they finished third overall with 67 points.

Andale won the state championship with 101 points and Chanute was the state runner-up with 71.

Louisburg got points from a lot of different areas as the Wildcats medaled in 10 events and had 12 medalists overall, including all three of their relays.

Louisburg senior Tom Koontz won a pair of state titles in the hurdles, while sophomore Caden Caplinger captured the gold medal in the pole vault.

“I am not going to complain at all,” Koontz said. “I believe

we came here with less people than we did last year and everyone did their best. Even though we didn't get exactly what we wanted, third place is still a great achievement."

The Wildcats had several impressive showings throughout the two-day meet at Wichita State University, but none came close to matching the 110-meter high hurdles.



Louisburg junior Mason Dobbins earned three state medals, including a runner-up finish in the 110 hurdles.

Koontz finished first with a time of 14.61 seconds to win his second straight state title, but it was juniors Mason Dobbins and Nathan Apple that brought it full circle.

Dobbins finished as the state runner-up in a personal best time of 15 seconds and it was one of three medals he earned Saturday.

"I was really excited to finish runner up in the 110 hurdles," Dobbins said. "I felt that it is my best race and I was happy to see the results of my hard work. It meant a lot to see Tom and Nathan accomplish what they wanted to accomplish. We all

pushed each other to be better every day.”



Nathan Apple medaled fourth in the 110 hurdles Saturday at the state meet with a personal best time of 15.11 seconds.

Apple found the state podium for the first time as he picked the perfect opportunity to run his personal best. He finished fourth overall in 15.11 seconds.

“It was amazing to make it to state again and earn a medal this year,” Apple said. “Getting to that point honestly felt like redemption as I missed my shot at medaling last year because I came out of my blocks wrong. The competition between the three of us only pushes us to do better.

“Tom and Mason have always been a little bit faster than me, and because of this I’ve always had the goal of catching them. In the end, it was incredible to see what we had accomplished as a group for our team and ourselves.”



The three Wildcat hurdlers get together for a group hug following the 110-meter hurdles.

Between the three hurdlers, the Wildcats accumulated 24 points and was big to getting that state plaque. It was an event that the three Louisburg hurdlers have been dominating all season long.

“It’s kinda insane that three of the eight hurdlers that made finals at state were all from the same place and only at most a year apart,” Apple said. “I wouldn’t have gotten this far without the other two and I’m grateful that I had the chance to run with Tom and that I have one more year with Mason.”

Junior Nathan Vincent had his best outing as a Wildcat in the javelin, and this was after earning a medal at state a season ago.

In his first throw of the competition, Vincent recorded a personal best toss of 183 feet, 5 inches, and also had a throw of 182-2 in his final attempt in the finals.



Louisburg junior Nathan Vincent was third in the javelin at state with a throw of 183-5.

Andale's Riley Marx won the competition at 206-5, while his teammate Jonah Meyer was second at 186-4.

"It was an awesome feeling medaling for the second year in a row, especially rising up another place," Vincent said. "I'm always really amped up for that first throw especially at state, but for me the pressure was always there. I knew the Andale kids were going to bring it and put a few good marks out there so I was always trying to get a farther mark and push for another PR."



Hunter Heinrich helped pair of Louisburg relays to two state medals Saturday at the state meet in Wichita.

In their relays, the Wildcats saved their best finish for last as the 4×400-meter relay team of Koontz, Hunter Heinrich, Colyer Wingfield and Ethan Ptacek ended the meet with a fourth place finish in 3:30.

The Wildcats held on to third place in the team standings by staying with the Topeka-Hayden team that finished third in the relay. Hayden took fourth in the team standings with 64 points and the race was critical in allowing the Wildcats to get another state plaque.



Junior Ethan Ptacek finished with three state medals, including running the anchor on the 4×100 relay team Saturday in Wichita.

Koontz, Dobbins, Caden Caplinger and Ptacek helped the 4×100 relay to a fifth place finish in 44.05 seconds. Ptacek would also go on to take eighth in the 400 dash in 51.54 and finished the meet with three medals.

Dobbins picked up his third state medal in the 200-meter dash as he finished fifth in 23.78 seconds after setting a personal record of time of 22.80 in the prelims Friday.

The Louisburg junior just missed out on getting his fourth medal as he took ninth in the high jump with a 5-10 clearance.



Senior Hayden Ross takes off in the second leg of the 4×800 relay Saturday in Wichita.

In the 4×800-meter relay, the team of Heinrich, Hayden Ross, Jerynce Brings Plenty and Jaden Vohs ran a time of 8:32 to medal seventh overall.

Vohs, a senior, earned his second state medal in the 1,600-meter run as he was sixth in 4:36.

“Leaving with two state medals was an experience I will not forget,” Vohs said. “Those were the last high school medals I will ever get. But now it’s time to start a new chapter of running at the college level.”



Louisburg senior Jaden Vohs takes the handoff from Jerynce Brings Plenty during the 4×800 relay.

“With the weather not being the best on Saturday, I didn’t run as fast as I wanted to. But this year, 4A got a lot more competitive, and with all these factors, I’m proud that I was able to place.”

Also in the distance races, Brings Plenty, a freshman, recorded a new personal best time of 10:11 and took 11th overall.

Wingfield just missed out on a medal in the long jump Saturday as he took ninth overall with a mark of 20-8.75. He went on to take 14th in the triple jump Friday with a leap of 39-10.

Senior Cooper Hipp finished 16th in the 200 dash in his first state appearance with a time of 23.88.