

Returning state medalists highlight Wildcat track for 2023 season



Louisburg senior Mason Dobbins is one of eight returning state medalists for the Wildcat boys track and field team this season.

A state championship and a third place finish – that is how the season ended the last two years for the Louisburg boys track and field team.

The Wildcats are hoping for the same type of finish again in 2023.

The boys and girls teams open their season today at the Leavenworth Invitational, and both teams are hoping for big years as they return several state medalists on each side.

“We are coming off an amazing season,” Louisburg boys coach Andy Wright said. “I would like to see us continue that high as we return eight state qualifiers. There will be some big shoes to fill in the sprints and distance events from last year’s seniors. I am confident that we have underclassmen that are up to the challenge. I am really looking forward to another great season, with some great athletes to work with.”

Louisburg returns eight state medalists from a season ago and it begins with junior pole vaulter Caden Caplinger, who won the state title in that event last year.



Caden Caplinger returns after winning the state title in the pole vault as a sophomore.

Caplinger has even higher goals for himself this year after he won the gold at 14-6 at last year's state meet.

"Caden has already improved from last year's personal record," Wright said. "He has been working hard in the off season to reclaim his title in a class of tough competition."

The Wildcats will feature plenty of other talent in the field events as well, one of those being Nathan Vincent. The Louisburg senior medaled at state in the javelin for the second straight year as he took third with a throw of more than 180 feet.

Vincent will also try and earn state bids in the discus and shot put as well as he will lead the Wildcat throwers.

"If Nathan stays healthy, he could be a force and place at the

state level in all three throwing events,” Wright said.

Along with Vincent, senior Jackson Rooney will also be a regular point-getter in the throws for Louisburg, as will Cooper Wingfield in the pole vault.



Louisburg senior Nathan Vincent returns to lead the Wildcat throws this year after medaling third a

In the jumps, senior Colyer Wingfield returns in the long and triple jump, as he qualified for state in both events a year ago. Senior Isaiah Whitley, another past state qualifier, also returns in the jumps.

Senior Mason Dobbins will look to score points in both the track and field this season. He will compete in the high jump, after medaling in the event two years ago, and will be busy on the track.

Dobbins returns to lead the Wildcat hurdlers as he finished second in the 110 hurdles at state last season. He was also a state medalist in the 200 dash and on two relays.

The Wildcats also have another returning state medalist in the hurdles in Nathan Apple. The Louisburg senior was fourth at

state in the 110s last season and will also look to medal in the 300 hurdles as well.

“I’m expecting big things from Mason and Nathan this season,” Wright said. “Both are ranked at the top of hurdlers in 4A. Nathan has been also improving in the 300 hurdles as well. These two should be in the top six at most of the meets.”



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

Another returning state medalist on the track is Ethan Ptacek. The Louisburg senior medaled in the 400 dash last season and will look to try and qualify in the 200 as well.

“Ethan will be our work horse this year,” Wright said. “He will anchor our 4×1 and 4×4 , plus run in the 200 and 400. He has been working on getting stronger and faster in the off season. Excited to see what he will do this season.”

The Wildcats will also bring back several key pieces to all three relay teams that medaled at state. In the 4×100, Dobbins, Caplinger and Ptacek all return, while junior Hunter Heinrich, Wingfield and Ptacek come back in the 4×400.

In the 4×800, Heinrich and sophomore Jerynce Brings Plenty will lead that group. Brings Plenty also returns to lead the distance runners.

“I still think we will be strong in the relays,” Wright said. “We will mix and match to begin the season and find the four that will run together later.”

On the girls side, senior Emma Lohse will lead the Lady Cats on the track as a returning state medalist. Lohse took fourth in the 100 dash last season and also qualified for state in the 200.

Lohse will lead a group of 25 girls out on the girls side as the Lady Cats are coming off a strong finish at state a year ago.



Louisburg senior Emma Lohse will help lead the Lady Cat track team as a returning state medalist.

“We have a good core of returners and some freshmen and first timers to boost the talent,” Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. “Emma should have a great season and I look forward to

fielding a 4x1 relay that should be competitive.”

Joining Lohse in the sprints, will be freshmen Suzanna Dansel and Kendall Crossley. Sophomore Mackenzie Rooney will run the 300 hurdles after qualifying for state a year ago and was a part of the 4x400 relay.

In the distance races, junior Maddy Rhamy returns after she earned a state medal last season in the 3,200 run, while fellow junior Emma Vohs will do the same in the 1,600 run as she is also a returning state medalist.

“I feel Emma and Maddy will be very competitive all season and will and make their way back to being top performers at state,” Reece said.

In the field events, junior Maddy Carpenter-Ross will compete in the pole vault after medaling fifth at state a year ago.



Louisburg junior Maddy Carpenter-Ross returns after earning a state medal in the pole vault last season.

In the throws, junior Katie Elpers is back for another strong season in the javelin after earning a sixth place state medal in 2022.

Also in the throws, senior Emma Prettyman returns to score points in the throws, as will freshman Kenna Lohse.

“The field events will be solid this year and we will look to Maddy to score in the pole vault, and when Katie gets over a shoulder issue, we look for her to step up as well,” Reece said. “Emma and Kenna will be adding points in all three throws and hopefully make a bid for state.”