

Wildcat track hoping for another trip to the state podium



Louisburg junior Caden Caplinger returns to help the lead the Wildcat boys track team as a two-time state champion in the pole vault.

The Louisburg boys track and field team has had its fair share of success the last three seasons – to put it mildly.

The Wildcats were state champions in 2021, took third in 2022 and last season suffered heartbreak as they missed a chance at a second state title by a half of a point. Louisburg has been a fixture on the state podium.

Although the Wildcats lost a big chunk of that state runner-up team, they still return a strong nucleus and have added some newcomers to help fill those voids. Louisburg returns eight state qualifiers and seven of those earned state medals.

“Coming off an amazing season in 2023, finishing second in the state was bittersweet,” Louisburg boys coach Andy Wright said. “I know our athletes would like to see us continue to pick up the work right where we left off. There will be some big shoes to fill in the sprints and throws. We have a handful of new sprinters and jumpers out for track this year that will be working to step into a role. I’m excited to see what they can do and fill in the spots that we lost from last year’s team.”

When it comes to one event, the Wildcats might be the best in Class 4A as they return the top two pole vaulters from last season.

Senior Caden Caplinger is a returning 2-time state champion in the event, while his teammate, junior Cooper Wingfield, was the state runner-up last season. Just like last year, Wright expects his two vaulters to motivate each other.

“Both Caden and Cooper have been working all off season on jumping,” Wright said. “They are already ahead of where we were at this time last year. I’m excited to see these two push each other this season. Being able to have that competition every day at practice to push each other is critical to being able to compete at meets.”

On the track, the Wildcats also return their top distance runner in Jerynce Brings Plenty. At the state meet last season, Brings Plenty was third in the 3,200-meter run and broke the school record. He also finished sixth in the 1,600 run.



Louisburg junior Jerynce Brings Plenty returns after earning three state medals last season.

Along with scoring points at state in the 4×800 relay, Wright believes Brings Plenty can have a big season.

“Jerynce has been looking strong at practice,” Wright said. “He had a great cross country season, but I know he is not satisfied and is looking forward to showing what he can do on the track as well.”

Brings Plenty will also join senior Hunter Heinrich, junior Colton Blue and sophomore Blaise Vohs in the 4×800 relay after the group took seventh at state last season.

The Wildcats will have some holes to fill in their 4×100 and 4×400 relays after they scored in both events out at state. Heinrich and Vohs return to lead the 4×400, while Caplinger and junior Ashton Moore will anchor the 4×100.

"We are going to mix and match the 4×4 and 4×1 relays for the first few meets," Wright said. "I'm hopeful by midseason we will have a solid 4 for each relay, but that competition for spots on the relays is what makes it great for the athletes as well, as they have to bring their best effort and energy to the track to maintain that position."

In the throws, seniors Jaymes Melton and Ben O'Bryan return to lead the shot and discus throwers, while senior Lane Cunningham will do the same in the javelin.

Seniors Wyatt Holland, Heinrich, along with Moore, Emmett White, Josiah McCaskill, Jay McCaskill, Caleb and Gage Feldkamp, will compete in the sprints. Juniors Gavin Lohse and Myles Vohs will compete in the sprints and jumps.

Blue and Blaise Vohs will run the 800-meters, while senior Noah Cotter returns in the 3,200 run.

The girls side also returns its fair share of athletes and it starts with a returning state champion.



Louisburg senior Maddy Carpenter-Ross returns to lead the Wildcat girls team after winning the state title in the pole vault last season.

Senior Maddy Carpenter-Ross headlines a group of 31 girls that came out for track this season. Carpenter-Ross is back after winning the state pole vault title and is looking for a repeat performance again this year.

“As the season begins, we will get a better feel for how we compare to our competition,” Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. “We feel good about our group and look for them to be strong competitors in their respective events and move them around to get their best each meet.

“We look for Maddy to have a great year and hope to have a repeat of the state meet. She vaulted well indoors, so we hope to see this continue.”

Louisburg will return half of its 4×100-meter relay from a year ago that placed at state. Sophomores Suzanna Dansel and

Kendall Crossley are back, while senior Emma Vohs and sophomore Addi Mallett will compete for the other two spots.

The Wildcats will also run a 4×400 relay with Vohs, Crossley and Mallett and will mix in junior Presley Yows, along with freshmen Adelyn Moore and Caroline Apple. Junior Mackenzie Rooney, who lead off the relays last season, is out with an injury.

Dansel will also play a big role in the sprints for the Wildcats this season after scoring points in several meets in the 100 and 200-meter dashes. Vohs is a returning a state qualifier in the 400 dash as well, so the sprints are one of the strengths of the girls team.



Louisburg senior Emma Vohs is a returning state qualifier in the 400-meter dash, along with the 1,600-meter run.

“Suzanna has been working hard and we look for her to make

another step forward and lead our sprint crew, along with Emma, Kendall and Addi,” Reece said.

In the distance races, seniors Maddy Rhamy and Erin Apple return to lead Louisburg. Rhamy medaled at state in the 3,200 run as a sophomore.

Senior Kate Frederick will lead the Wildcat hurdlers as she returns in both the 100 and 300.

Louisburg also brings back state experience in the throws. Senior Katie Elpers has qualified for state in the javelin the last two seasons and has one medal.

Sophomore Kenna Lohse returns after qualifying for state as a freshman in the shot put and will do all three throws this season.

“Katie looks to make another run at state and hopefully find a spot on the podium,” Reece said. “She is throwing well to start so we are looking for big gains this season. The sky’s the limit for Kenna. There is a good core group of girl throwers that will push each other so the inner squad competition is fierce.”

Louisburg will open its season today as the Wildcats travel to the Ottawa Invitational.