

Wingfield wins state title for injured teammate, Wildcats medal five at state



Louisburg junior Cooper Wingfield pumps his fist after clearing 15 feet in the pole vault last Friday at the Class 4A state meet in Wichita. He captured his first state title in the event.

WICHITA – As Cooper Wingfield stood atop the medal stand Friday at the Class 4A state track meet, he was filled with an over abundance of joy and pride.

He had just captured his first state championship in the pole vault – something he had worked hard all season for. However, something was missing – or more specifically – someone.

Louisburg senior Caden Caplinger, a two-time state champion, was all set to try for a third straight crown, but a knee

injury prior to the season derailed that chance.

Without Caplinger, there was a void among the Wildcat vaulters and Wingfield felt it while getting his gold medal.

"It means a lot," Wingfield said of the state title "I wanted to win it for Caden. It was hard this season without him. We would warm up together, come in together and it was different with him not being there. It means a lot to continue the legacy. I wanted to be able to win it for Caden and I'm glad I did."



Louisburg junior Cooper Wingfield stood atop the state podium Friday in Wichita after winning the pole vault.

However, the state title was never a sure thing.

Wingfield, who was the state runner-up to Caplinger last season, entered the competition at 14 feet. He missed the first two attempts on his opening height, and another miss would not only prevent him from a state title, but a spot on

the medal stand.

On the third attempt, the Louisburg junior cleared it with ease and eventually cleared 15 feet on his first attempt, which was the winning height.

"I was really nervous there on that last attempt (at 14 feet)," Wingfield said. "All I needed was a good jump to get in the zone and from there I knew I could jump pretty high. The competition was a lot harder this time around than it was last year. I knew I had to make everything on my first attempt and once I had one good jump, I knew I could do it."

It had already been a special season in the pole vault for Wingfield, as he earned a league and regional title, and broke the school record last month. Friday's victory was the perfect ending in what Wingfield hopes is the first of two state titles.

"It was a pretty successful season, but hopefully I can jump higher next year," Wingfield said. "I would have liked to go higher, but once I won it, I didn't take care. Excited to see what I can do in the future."



Louisburg junior Jacob Brown clears a height in the pole vault. Friday at the 4A state meet in Wichita. Brown medaled eighth in the event.

Wingfield wasn't the only Wildcat to earn a spot on the medal stand. Junior Jacob Brown vaulted his way to a state medal as well.

Brown cleared 13 feet to earn eighth place overall in what was his first state meet.

"It is pretty cool," Brown said. "It wasn't the same without Caden up there, but it was pretty cool to be able to stand up there with Cooper. It was just a good season overall. I wish I could have gone a little higher, but I was happy."

Louisburg also earned state medals in three other field events and it started Friday morning in the long jump competition.



Louisburg junior Gavin Lohse finished third in the long jump at the Class 4A state track meet at Wichita State.

Junior Gavin Lohse took third place overall in with a leap of 21 feet, 1.75 inches. Lohse found the medal stand in what was just his first year of track.

"It meant a lot to me, especially going into the season not knowing anything about the sport," Lohse said. "I didn't know what to expect, quitting baseball and starting track my junior year. I thought it was possible (to get a medal), I just had to work really hard to get there."

It was a rough start to the competition for Lohse as he scratched on his first two attempts of the preliminaries and was in danger of not making the finals. Then on his third attempt, jumped over 20 feet to get into the finals.

Lohse jumped his best on his first attempt of the final round to earn the third place spot. He also nearly earned a second medal in the 100-meter dash Saturday, but took 10th in the prelims in 11.36 seconds.



Louisburg senior Jaymes Melton took seventh in the shot put with a personal best throw on Friday at the state meet in

Wichita.

Later on in the day Friday, senior Jaymes Melton became the third state medalist for Louisburg as he saved his best effort for last in the shot put.

On his first throw of the competition, Melton set a new personal record with a toss of 49-5.75 to earn a spot in the finals. Although he didn't better his throw, it was still good enough for a seventh place medal.

"Winning a state medal for track my senior means achieving a personal goal," Melton said. "There have been challenges to overcome and this forced me to push my limits, and a state medal is the best reward and ending I could have received in my high school athletic journey.

"Overall, I feel like I performed well. The first throw definitely helped relieve some of the nerves I had going in. My first throw was a new PR for me and sent me to the finals. After I did that, the nerves were not as bad and so I just focused on my technique for the next five throws. "

Louisburg senior Ben O'Bryan did much of the same Saturday in the discus competition.

O'Bryan recorded a personal best throw of 154-9 in his first throw of the preliminaries. That was good enough for a seventh-place finish and his first state medal.



Louisburg senior Ben O'Bryan medaled seventh overall in the discus with a personal best throw Saturday in Wichita.

"To win a medal in my final year was monumental for me and something I never thought would happen until this year," O'Bryan said. "I didn't just get it for me, I got it for my coaches and family. Going into the ring I could feel the pressure as there were lots of good throwers at state. But once I got my first throw in that secured my spot in finals, the nerves went away."

The Wildcat 4×400-meter relay of Hunter Heinrich, Aidan Meyer, Emmett White and Blaise Vohs just missed out on a medal as they took ninth in 3:32. Heinrich and Meyer took 12th and 14th, respectively, in the 400 dash.

The 4×800-meter relay of Vohs, Colton Blue, Jerynce Brings Plenty and Myles Vohs were also edged out of the medals as

they finished 10th in 8:21.

Senior Noah Cotter finished 12th in the 3,200-meter run in 10:40.

As a team, the Wildcats boys finished 17th out of 28 teams with 21 points. Andale won the state championship with 70.5 points and Bishop Miege was runner-up with 61.