

Thank you, Louisburg!



Getting to cover so many great kids was an honor for me, including these guys as they were generous enough to let me in their group picture.

Eleven years ago, I was a nervous wreck.

I had just been laid off from my newspaper job, one where I had spent seven years covering Louisburg. Like so many others in this profession, I suddenly found myself staring at an uncertain future as newspapers continued to disappear. Jobs were scarce. Stability was gone. And I had a family to support.

I knew I was probably going to have to take a job I didn't want – something far from journalism – just to make ends meet.

Then an idea hit me.

With news media shifting more and more online, I wondered: *Would Louisburg support something like this?* Would the community care enough about local sports to follow an independent site dedicated solely to their athletes?

As it turned out, the answer was an overwhelming yes.

Because of the relationships I had built during my first seven years here, there was an appetite from local businesses to support the idea – and many of them never wavered. Eleven years later, a lot of those same businesses were still standing beside Louisburg Sports Zone, believing it was an important piece of the community.

They were right – and I couldn't agree more.

This past decade-plus has been some of the best years of my life. Through Louisburg Sports Zone, I formed incredible relationships with coaches, athletes, administrators, parents and community members. Even as a graduate of rival Paola, the Louisburg community adopted me as one of their own.

For those of you around my age or older, this might resonate.

I often felt like *Norm* from *Cheers*.

Every time I walked into a gym, stadium or field, I'd hear, "Hey Andy!" or "Thanks for coming!" or "We appreciate you." So many people knew my name – even people I didn't know – simply because they appreciated what I did.

Instead of an icy cold glass in my hand, I carried a camera. My barstool wasn't at a counter – it was on the sideline, capturing moments as they happened. And there were plenty of them.

State championships. State tournament appearances. Individual champions and medalists. Record-breaking performances.

I was lucky enough to see it all.

But my favorite part was always watching kids grow – seeing freshmen mature into seniors and leave as confident, capable young adults. That transformation never got old.

My very first event as Louisburg Sports Zone was a home basketball game. I was only a couple months removed from being laid off and still unsure if this idea would work or if anyone would even care.

Those worries disappeared quickly.

As I walked into the gym, Natalie Moore, Kirstin Lowry and Kallie O'Keefe stopped their warmups to smile and wave. Coach Shawn Lowry walked clear across the court to shake my hand and welcome me back.

More than a decade later, I still get those same smiles from athletes and handshakes from coaches and parents alike. Those connections are what made this decision so difficult.



Was fortunate to interview so many student athletes these last 11 years.

Six months ago, I was offered a position with KSHSAA Covered and the Kansas High School Activities Association. Honestly, I

never thought I'd have another writing job outside of Louisburg Sports Zone. I fully intended to keep doing this until the appetite for it simply wasn't there anymore.

But the opportunity was too good to pass up – and it was the right move for my family.

I knew the connections wouldn't be the same. Starting over is hard, especially when you know what you're leaving behind. My favorite part of this job was feeling the appreciation from the community and knowing I was giving people something positive to read.

I wasn't perfect. I made mistakes along the way. But this community allowed me to grow – as a writer, photographer and a person. I always tried to do the best I could and to cover every sport as fairly and equally as possible.

The last five or six years put me in an interesting position, as my own kids were playing varsity sports. How do you balance being a supportive dad and a journalist at the same time? I hope I did it right.

One of the biggest perks of this job was getting to write about my kids – their first varsity goal, first basket, first shutout or a big volleyball performance. I know how lucky I was to experience that.

None of this would have been possible without my family – especially my wife, Jennifer. I wasn't home much in the evenings, especially with young kids, and that wasn't easy. She never stopped supporting me.



It was awesome to have my family with me as I was surprised with Louisburg Citizen of the Year a few years ago.

To my kids – Jordan, Ally and Carter – thank you for understanding the crazy hours and for supporting me even when

I couldn't be at everything like other parents. I love you more than you know.

I also want to thank all of my advertisers, past and present. Louisburg Sports Zone doesn't exist without you. Craig Holtzen and Edward Jones, Dixon Contracting Services, White's Automotive, Prime Accounting Services, Amborn Stone, Wildcat Vet Clinic, Dr. Andy Hill, Destination Fun Travel, Vance Brothers, Go Brolly, First National Bank, First Option Bank, Landmark Bank, Dr. Laura's Orthodontics, IronHorse Family and Cosmetic Dentistry, Louisburg Family Dental, Vohs Pharmacy, Elliott Insurance, Magnum Equipment, Louisburg Athletic Club, Louisburg Library, Tri-County Pest, Midwest Collision – and so many others along the way.

I also wanted to give a big shoutout to a Louisburg graduate – Kenneth Sweeney. He has been my “web guy” this whole time. He helped design the site and has also been there to help me troubleshoot what problems have come up since then. I couldn't have done it without him.

Thank you to every coach I've worked with. Getting to know you and promote your programs has truly been an honor. I appreciate you enduring my countless emails that I send out every week. You have helped make Louisburg Sports Zone what it is as well. I will miss you all.

And finally, the student-athletes – you are the reason this worked. Thank you for letting me into your lives and giving me so many incredible stories to tell. And consider this a long-overdue apology to anyone I ever did “dirty” with an unfortunate action photo.

So here I am, 11 years later, feeling some of those same nerves as I move into something new. The last six months with KSHSAA Covered have been great, and I've been welcomed with open arms.

Still, walking away from something I built was not easy.

I only hope that Louisburg Sports Zone has been as much of a blessing to you as it has been to me. These have been some of the best times of my life – and I will treasure them always.

Thank you, Louisburg.

Top 10 Louisburg Sports Stories of 2025



It was a successful, and eventful, year for Louisburg High School athletics and for those who are connected to the Wildcat program.

This past year created a lot of school history for LHS and a

few programs made their way to state competition.

Below are the top stories from 2025, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the writeup is the link to the actual story from the event.

When putting the list together, I took a lot of things into account – whether it was team vs. individual, popularity of the sport, historical achievements and the interest it drew on the web site.

Although 2025 will be the last for Louisburg Sports Zone, I am looking forward to seeing, from a distance, what Louisburg athletics can accomplish in the future. Thank you all for the support in these last 11 years. I will never forget it.



Louisburg senior Sam Frederick carded an 87 during the May 19 regional tournament and earned a top 10 finish and a state

bid, along with teammate Derek Frederick.

10. Wildcat golf qualifies two for state

A year ago, the Louisburg golf team suffered heartbreak when the Wildcats were completely shut out of the state tournament.

Not this year, however.

The Wildcats sent two golfers to the state tournament this past May as senior Sam Frederick and junior Derek Frederick both represented Louisburg after earning a spot following the May 19 regional tournament at the Independence Country Club.

Both players competed in their first state tournament, which was held May 27 at the Sand Creek Station Course in Newton.

Sam Frederick earned a regional medal with a top 10 performance as he led the Wildcat team. The Louisburg senior finished 10th with an 87 on a tough Independence Country Club course. Independence had the top three individual finishers, led by champion Ethan Small, who had a 75.

Derek Frederick was the final individual to qualify for the state tournament as he carded a 91 and took 17th overall.

9. Coaching changes as Brown, Crossley, Schonning take over volleyball, wrestling, girls soccer programs

There were some coaching changes in 2025 as three teams found new leaders to take charge of their respective programs.

Rich Brown (volleyball), Shawn Crossley (wrestling) and Dawson Schonning (girls soccer) were all hired new Louisburg head coaches.

Brown, who took over from Leanna Willer, helped the Wildcats to the sub-state championship game this past season.

Crossley takes over from long-time coach Bobby Bovaird, who resigned following the season earlier this year. Crossley, who is an LHS alum and former Wildcat wrestler, was an assistant coach the last several years.

As for Schonning, he takes over from former coach Jordan Roquemore who helped lead the Wildcats to a fourth-place state finish a year ago. Schonning, who is new to the district this year, was an assistant coach on the boys team this past fall.



Louisburg senior Sabra Brueggen swims the 200 individual medley on May 24 during the Class 5-1A Kansas State Swim and Dive Championships in Topeka.

8. Brueggen earns pair of state swim medals

TOPEKA – As Sabra Brueggen stepped onto the state swim podium for the final time, a flood of memories came rushing back.

Memories of when it all started, the friends she made and all her successes along the way. Brueggen has been one of the top swimmers in Class 5-1A the last four years and she proved it once again on May 24 during the Kansas State Swim and Dive Championships in Topeka.

The Louisburg senior ended her high school career with two state medals and a lifetime full of memories.

“Ending my high school career was a very sentimental moment for me,” Brueggen said. “It was the last time I would be racing some of the girls I have been swimming against since age six. Being able to share the podium with them one last time made it even more meaningful, making me very proud of how I performed at my final state meet.”

Brueggen had strong swims throughout 2-day meet that began on May 23 at the Capitol Federal Natatorium. In the prelims, she qualified for the finals in fifth in both the 200-yard individual medley and 100 backstroke.

In the finals, Brueggen found her way to the medal stand as she finished sixth in the 200 individual medley in 2 minutes and 14.42 seconds.

The 100 backstroke proved to be much of the same for Brueggen there as she also medaled sixth in a time of 58.81 seconds. It completed a string of four straight years of earning a state medal.



The Louisburg girls cross country team of (from left) Talen McMurray, Annie Hornberger, Karissa Williamson, Maddox McGhee, Hailey Shelton, Reese Smith and Felicity Allen won the program's first regional title.

7. Wildcat girls make history with first regional cross country title

NEODESHA – For the first time in program history, the Louisburg girls cross country team left a regional meet as champions.

On a rainy, muddy Saturday at Riverside Park in Neodesha, the Wildcats powered through the slick conditions to win the Class 4A regional championship with 39 points – seven ahead of runner-up Paola. The victory also secured a state berth for the entire Louisburg squad.

"It was awesome and emotional to see the girls leave Neodesha as regional champs," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "It has been a long time in the making as we have had multiple teams qualify for state but have never won a regional title. The rankings had us winning the meet, but those are just rankings. The girls showed up to compete and that is exactly what they did."

It was a youthful lineup that led the Wildcats to history, featuring two freshmen, four sophomores and one junior – and the youngest runners set the tone. Freshman Karissa Williamson finished fourth overall in 22:40.26, just ahead of fellow freshman Maddox McGhee, who took fifth in 22:40.46. Sophomore Hailey Shelton placed sixth in 22:57, giving Louisburg three runners in the top 10.

Sophomore Reese Smith finished ninth in 23:50, junior Talen McMurray placed 16th in 24:16, and sophomores Felicity Allen and Annie Hornberger rounded out the lineup in 23rd and 27th, respectively.

The team went on to run at state along with Truman Ellison, Titus Ellison and Spencer Mattison, who qualified for state on the boys side.



Louisburg senior Ashton Moore wrestles in the 215-pound state championship in Salina. Moore finished second overall.

6. Moore state runner-up in wrestling, Wildcats qualify 7 for state

SALINA – In the final match of his wrestling career, Ashton Moore found himself competing for a state championship.

It was exactly the place he envisioned himself being, even before the season started. The result, however, was a different story.

Moore's dreams of a state title were dashed Saturday at the Class 4A state wrestling tournament in Salina. Smoky Valley's Parker Gardner ended his run with a 13-5 major decision at 215 pounds.

As disappointing as the loss was for Moore, looking back on his long wrestling career helped ease the pain – as did the second place state medal.

“It was tough taking that loss,” Moore said. “I was pretty down about it, but then I had a moment that put things more into perspective for me. After our practice on Friday, Coach (Bobby) Bovaird took us up to the top of the arena to talk about the tournament. Sitting there I remembered being in that same spot as a sixth grader watching the championship round there. At that age I thought those guys were amazing and the toughest people I’d ever seen.

“So after my loss I thought back to that moment being a sixth grader and I was able to realize how far I’ve come. To see myself at that level now made me very proud I was able to make it to that stage.”

The Wildcat program also had six other wrestlers compete at the state tournament, including two on the girls side.

Seniors Brayden Yoder (215), Canaan Clayton (120), Mika McKittrick (132) and sophomore Levi Cotter (106) each finished the tournament with an 0-2 mark.

On the girls side, Leola Eslinger and Brooklyn DeWeese became the first Wildcat girls to ever qualify for state.



The Louisburg Jazzy Cats pose with their third place state plaque.

5. Jazzy Cats take third at state dance

The Louisburg High School Jazzy Cats made their mark in program history on Nov. 21, earning a third-place finish in Class 4A at the State Game Day Spirit Showcase at the Stormont-Vail Events Center in Topeka.

In their first-ever trip to state competition, the Jazzy Cats not only reached the finals but left with some hardware.

Coach Sarah Alexander said the entire experience was meaningful, not only because of the results, but because it was all uncharted territory for the program.

“This was the first time the Jazzy Cats had ever attended state, so the entire experience was brand new for all of us,” Alexander said. “To come home with a state plaque was absolutely incredible. The girls were thrilled just to have the opportunity to compete, and bringing home a plaque made all of their hard work feel truly rewarding. It was such a special moment for the team and a huge milestone for our program.”

Louisburg scored 81.41 in the finals, just enough to edge Holton (81.23) by the slimmest of margins for the final spot on the podium. Ottawa won the state championship with a score of 90.13, while Bishop Miege secured second at 85.77.



The Louisburg cheer team finished as the state runner-up at the 4A state competition on Nov. 22 in Topeka. It is the sixth top 3 finish for the Wildcats in the last seven years.

4. Louisburg cheer earns Class 4A state runner-up

TOPEKA – The Louisburg High School cheer team added another trophy to its growing collection on Nov. 22, earning the Class 4A state runner-up title at the Game Day Cheer Championships at Stormont-Vail Events Center.

The Wildcats posted an 87.73 in the finals to take second place behind defending state champion Paola, which won with a 94.27. Holton finished third at 85.

For Louisburg, the return to the podium was nothing new. The Wildcats have now finished in the top three six times in the last seven seasons, cementing themselves as one of the state's

most consistent programs.

Louisburg entered the finals in fourth place, boosted by a Fight Song and Crowd Leading routine that ranked second among all teams. The Wildcats had roughly 20 minutes to review score sheets and adjust before stepping back onto the mat—pressure they handled with poise.

“It was truly a special day for all of us,” head coach Breanna Kostroske said. “From the moment we arrived, the athletes were focused, calm, and determined. They’ve poured so much into this season, so seeing them step onto the mat with confidence and joy made the entire experience incredibly meaningful.”



Louisburg senior Cooper Wingfield won the Class 4A state pole vault title on May 30 at Wichita State University.

3. Wingfield wins state pole vault title; Meyer, Vohs earn three state medals to lead Wildcat track

For the last four years, Louisburg has dominated the pole vault on the boys side in Class 4A and had its fair share of success on the girls side.

Caden Caplinger and Maddy Carpenter-Ross earned back-to-back state titles during that span and now it was Cooper Wingfield's opportunity.

Wingfield won gold in the pole vault in 2024 and was the favorite to win again this season – and he did it with ease. The Louisburg senior cleared 15 feet, 6 inches to win his second consecutive state championship during the Class 4A meet on May 30 at Wichita State University.

“It means a lot to win it back to back, not only for myself, but also to continue what Caden and Maddy had done before me,” Wingfield said. “This year made it four in a row that Louisburg had a state champion in the boys pole vault. It also made me the third back to back pole vault state champion for Louisburg in the last four years. I really wanted to continue that legacy and cement the dynasty we had and I am proud that I did.”

It had been a special year already for Wingfield as he broke his own school record earlier in the year with a clearance of 15-7.75 at the Kansas Relays.

Just like a year ago, his teammate Jacob Brown joined Wingfield on the state podium. Brown earned a fifth place medal after he cleared 14 feet as the Louisburg senior ended his Wildcat career as one of the best in the state.

Aidan Meyer and Myles Vohs each recorded three state medals as

they helped the Wildcats to a ninth-place finish with 32 points.

Meyer cemented his place in the Wildcat track history books in one of those events. The Louisburg senior broke a 14-year-old school record in the 400-meter dash as he earned a fourth place finish in 48.83 seconds.

As for Vohs, he opened the state meet with a fifth-place finish in the long jump. Meyer, Vohs, along with Gavin Lohse and Caleb Feldkamp, finished sixth overall in the 4×100 relay in 43.76 seconds.

Vohs, Meyer, along with Colton Blue and Emmett White, put together an all-senior 4×400-meter relay that took sixth in 3:27.

Another Louisburg senior, Jerynce Brings Plenty, ended his Wildcat track career with a state medal as well. Brings Plenty finished seventh in the 1,600-meter run in 4:39.78.

On the girls' side, the Louisburg 4×100-meter relay, Kendall Crossley (100-meter dash) and McKenna Lohse (shot put) all found their way to the state podium.

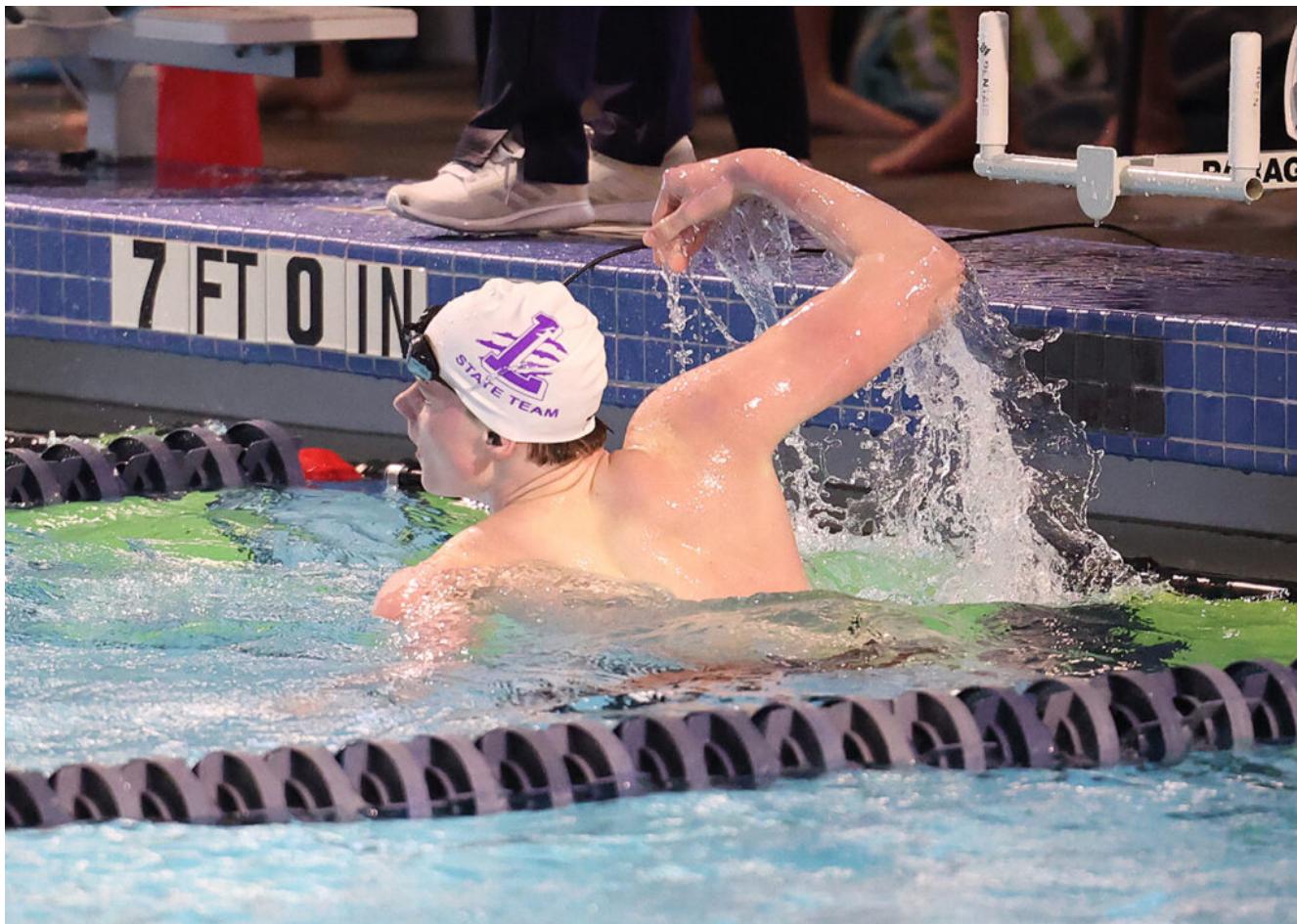
Louisburg's 4×100-meter relay team of senior Mackenzie Rooney, along with juniors Kendall Crossley, Addi Mallett and Suzanna Dansel finished fourth at state. The Wildcat group broke the school record during the regional meet and posted another fast time of 49.14 seconds during the prelims, which gave them the second fastest time heading into the finals.

That wouldn't be the only time Crossley found her way to the medal stand.

The Louisburg junior qualified for the finals of the 100-meter dash earlier in the day, and then in the finals, medaled eighth overall in 12.82 seconds.

In the shot put, Lohse put herself in good position in the

prelims. She recorded a throw of 37 feet, 1.25 inches in her first three attempts and was sitting in second place going into the finals, before taking fifth overall.



Louisburg junior Colin Brown celebrates after winning his prelim of the 100-yard butterfly at the Class 5-1A state championships in Lenexa.

2. Brown first Wildcat to win 2 state swim titles; Wildcats medal in 6 events

LENEXA – Colin Brown was all about making school history Saturday at the Class 5-1A Kansas State Swim and Dive Championships.

Brown became the first Louisburg swimmer in school history to win a state title and did so by winning the 100-yard butterfly. Some athletes would have been content with just the

one, but not Brown.

The Louisburg junior took to the water again in the 100 backstroke and won his second state title in a matter of minutes. It was also his fourth state medal of the day, which included a pair of relays.

"It was a surreal experience and an incredible honor," Brown said. "It was really cool to see all of the hard work and countless hours pay off. It also gave me a sense of pride knowing that I was representing the school while doing so."

That was the some of the success the Louisburg swim team had at the Shawnee Mission School District Aquatic Center. The Wildcats medaled in six events and finished seventh in the team standings with just four swimmers.

Louisburg junior Andrew Jamison also tallied four medals as made his way to the state podium in the 200 individual medley, 100 breaststroke and two relays. Senior Colton Prettyman and sophomore Noah Sharp joined the other Wildcats as state medalists in the relays.



The Louisburg girls soccer team took fourth at the Class 4-1A state tournament on May 31 in Wichita. Members of the team are (front row, from left) Brinley Ewy, Lila Edwards, Rylee Moore, Baileigh Johnson, Jaden Bentz, Ally Brown, Riley May, Rowan Yows, Merritt McIntire, Faith Sewell; (back row) assistant coach Lily McDaniel, Courtney Johnson, Ellia Gibbons, Sydney York, Caroline Apple, Cora Roche, Kahlan Harris, Juanina Schmidt, Briella Diehl, Mena Fercho, Faith Sewell and head coach Jordan Roquemore.

1. Wildcat soccer takes fourth at state for best finish since 2021

It may have been wet, muddy and just miserable weather for a day in late May, but for the Louisburg girls soccer team, all that didn't matter.

For the Wildcats, it was a beautiful day. Nothing was going to dampen their spirits.

Louisburg faced off against Eudora in the Class 4-1A state quarterfinal game on May 25 as it played for a spot in the state final four.

For the first time since 2021, the Wildcats got it. Louisburg shutout Eudora, 2-0, to earn its first state quarterfinal win in four years.

“It is an amazing achievement to make it to the state final four and I couldn’t be more proud of this team,” senior captain Jaden Bentz said. “This really shows the amount of hard work we’ve all put in throughout the season and it’s nice knowing it has paid off. I couldn’t ask for a better group of girls to play with. When the final whistle blew we all were filled with excitement and ran to each other, and that shows the tight sisterly bond our team has.”

Louisburg head coach Jordan Roquemore was an assistant the last time the Wildcats were in the state semifinals and he could tell his team wanted this one more than any game this season.

“I have never seen the team so jazzed about anything all season as when the game was over,” Roquemore said. “We are all really excited for the opportunity to compete in the Final Four this year.”

Louisburg squared off with Rose Hill in the third-place game of the Class 4-1A Kansas State Soccer Championships on May 31 at Wichita’s Stryker Complex. It didn’t take long for the Wildcats to get on the board.

The Wildcats struck first in the game’s opening minutes, but Rose Hill tied it in the first half and scored late in the second to hand Louisburg a 2-1 loss.

Louisburg was coming off a 2-0 loss in the state semifinals on May 28 as it hosted its first state semifinal game against Topeka-Hayden.

"Honestly, I was really proud of how we played this game," Louisburg coach Jordan Roquemore said. "Rose Hill is an exceptional squad and we not only kept them at bay defensively, we were very successful in creating attack opportunities. We were nearly even with them for shots on goal and I thought it was a very well-matched game for us."

Louisburg wraps up memorable cross country season at state meet



Louisburg freshman Maddox McGhee led the Wildcat cross country teams at the state meet as she took 34th overall. (Photo courtesy Brent Maycock, KSHSAA Covered)

WAMEGO – The Louisburg cross country program capped off one of its most memorable seasons on Nov. 1 as 10 runners – including the entire girls team – competed at the Class 4A state meet at the Wamego Country Club course.

It marked a fitting end to a historic fall for the Wildcats, whose girls captured the school's first-ever regional championship the week before at Neodesha.

Louisburg finished ninth in the state team standings with 202

points, led by junior Maddox McGhee, who placed 34th in 21:21. Hailey Shelton followed close behind in 39th (21:33), with Karissa Williamson taking 48th (21:58). Annie Hornberger (75th, 22:30), Talen McMurray (78th, 23:24), Reese Smith (79th, 23:27) and Felicity Allen (86th, 24:07) rounded out the Louisburg lineup.

“All of the runners did an amazing job,” Louisburg head coach John Reece said. “With only one of the 10 qualifiers having been to State before, I was thrilled with how they handled themselves and how they raced.”

Reece said the girls’ historic run – from winning regionals to competing against the state’s best – exceeded every expectation.

“The girls ran great races individually and as a team,” he said. “Winning regionals and then going to state was a perfect end to an amazing season. They went far beyond my expectations at the beginning of the year. They really came together as a team and left the state meet wanting even more next year.”



Louisburg junior Truman Ellison led the Wildcat boys in Wamego on Nov. 1 at the Class 4A state meet. (Photo courtesy Brent Maycock, KSHSAA Covered)

On the boys' side, Truman Ellison led the Wildcats with a 48th-place finish in 18:23. Titus Ellison was 60th (18:43) and Spencer Mattison was 63rd (18:46).

"The three boys did awesome at State," Reece said. "I was proud of their determination and grit during Regionals, and they were rewarded by individually qualifying for state. They represented their school and team well, and I know they'll be looking to qualify the whole team next year."

Even more encouraging for the Wildcats – every runner who competed at State will return next season.

"This year's teams far exceeded my expectations," Reece said. "Their hard work and mental toughness were immeasurable, and what makes it even better is that we had no seniors on the

squad. The future looks very good. Like athletes, coaches go through highs and lows throughout their careers, and this season was a definite high. I see even better things in our future."

Week 9 Athlete of the Week: Spencer Mattison



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week nine of the fall sports season, sponsored by IronHorse Family and Cosmetic Dentistry.

SPENCER MATTISON, JUNIOR, CROSS

COUNTRY

The Louisburg cross country team sent 10 runners to the Class 4A state meet last Saturday in Wamego and junior Spencer Mattison made the most of his time. Mattison recorded a personal best time on a tough Wamego course in 18 minutes and 46 seconds.

Mattison qualified for state for the first time in his cross country career and took 63rd overall out of 101 runners. To qualify for state, Mattison finished 13th overall at the regional meet in Neodesha the week before.

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday morning during the fall season and the winner is selected by Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.

Previous winners:

Week 1: Owen Marsh

Week 2: Caileigh Kilgore

Week 3: Maddox McGhee

Week 4: Blaise Vohs

Week 5: Evan Moreland

Week 6: Max Amren

Week 7: John Guetterman

Week 8: Adelyn Moore



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**Wildcat girls make history
with first regional cross
country title**



The Louisburg girls cross country team of (from left) Talen McMurray, Annie Hornberger, Karissa Williamson, Maddox McGhee, Hailey Shelton, Reese Smith and Felicity Allen won the program's first regional title last Saturday at Neodesha.

NEODESHA – For the first time in program history, the Louisburg girls cross country team left a regional meet as champions.

On a rainy, muddy Saturday at Riverside Park in Neodesha, the Wildcats powered through the slick conditions to win the Class 4A regional championship with 39 points – seven ahead of runner-up Paola. The victory also secured a state berth for the entire Louisburg squad.

“It was awesome and emotional to see the girls leave Neodesha as regional champs,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “It has been a long time in the making as we have had multiple teams qualify for state but have never won a regional title. The

rankings had us winning the meet, but those are just rankings. The girls showed up to compete and that is exactly what they did."

It was a youthful lineup that led the Wildcats to history, featuring two freshmen, four sophomores and one junior – and the youngest runners set the tone. Freshman Karissa Williamson finished fourth overall in 22:40.26, just ahead of fellow freshman Maddox McGhee, who took fifth in 22:40.46. Sophomore Hailey Shelton placed sixth in 22:57, giving Louisburg three runners in the top 10.

Sophomore Reese Smith finished ninth in 23:50, junior Talen McMurray placed 16th in 24:16, and sophomores Felicity Allen and Annie Hornberger rounded out the lineup in 23rd and 27th, respectively.

"We don't have a senior on the team and having two freshmen lead with four sophomores and a junior right behind them is amazing," Reece said. "Our time gap between No. 1 and No. 5 is about 1:30, which is amazing – and that's how you win championships."



Louisburg's (from left) Titus Ellison, Spencer Mattison and Truman Ellison each qualified for state cross country last Saturday in Neodesha.

On the boys' side, Louisburg qualified three individual runners for state. Juniors Titus and Truman Ellison – brothers – finished seventh and eighth in 19:29 and 19:36, while junior Spencer Mattison took 13th in 20:20. The Wildcats finished fourth as a team with 92 points, just six points shy of qualifying the full squad. Chanute won the boys team title with 25 points.

August Meyer took 26th overall in a time of 22:31 and Matthew Lien was 43rd in 24:25 to round out the Wildcat lineup.

"Titus, Truman and Spencer were more than determined to qualify for state," Reece said. "It was fantastic to see them all finish in the top 15 to punch their ticket. It was bittersweet to finish fourth as a team and only miss by six points, which showed how well August and Matthew ran their races."

Despite the tough course conditions – with standing water and muddy turns – Louisburg stayed focused.

"We controlled the controllables and did not let things we can't control affect us," Reece said. "The conditions were less than desirable, but we didn't let that impact how we were going to race."

Both teams will compete Saturday at the Class 4A state meet at Wamego Country Club.

"We've already run Wamego this year," Reece said. "I look for them to improve upon their times and leave with a want to return next year and do even better. The next few years are going to be a lot of fun – we have no seniors to replace and great talent coming up from LMS."

Wildcat boys cross country takes third at league, girls finish fourth



Louisburg's Levi Cotter (left) led the Wildcats on Oct. 16 at the Frontier League meet as he took ninth.

BALDWIN CITY – The Louisburg cross country teams turned in impressive performances at the Frontier League Championships on Oct. 16 in Baldwin, with the boys finishing third and the girls earning a strong fourth-place showing in one of the toughest leagues in Class 4A.

The Wildcat boys posted a team score of 83 points, trailing only league champion Spring Hill (30) and runner-up Eudora (49). Louisburg's top four runners all placed in the top 16 and earned All-Frontier League honors.

Junior Levi Cotter led the way, placing ninth in 18 minutes, 29 seconds. Titus Ellison followed in 13th (18:48), while Spencer Mattison (19:07.02) and Truman Ellison (19:07.92) finished 15th and 16th. August Meyer placed 33rd in 20:53, and Matthew Lien rounded out the team's scoring in 51st (24:01).

"The runners knew they could do well, but the boys' third-

place finish was amazing," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "Levi really stepped up for the team and ran a solid race. Putting four in the top 21 to get all-league honors was fantastic."

The Louisburg girls were equally strong, taking fourth overall with 98 points in a field that included several of the state's top programs. Baldwin won the girls' title with 39 points, followed by Eudora (65) and Spring Hill (81).

Freshman Maddox McGhee led the Wildcats with a breakout race, placing ninth in a personal-best time of 20:57 – the sixth-fastest time in school history. Karissa Williamson (17th, 21:33) and Hailey Shelton (21st, 21:59) also earned all-league recognition. Reese Smith finished 30th in 22:50, followed by Annie Hornberger (37th, 23:29) and Talen McMurray (44th, 23:45).

"Maddox continues to run well, and her teammates are right there with her," Reece said. "Getting three all-league honors was great. Both groups are really displaying the team concept of cross country. If a teammate doesn't have their best race, someone else steps up and helps them through it."

Louisburg now turns its focus to Saturday's Class 4A regional meet at Riverside Park in Neodesha. The girls' race begins at 10:35 a.m., followed by the boys at 11:45.

"Regionals could be a special day for our program," Reece said. "We're going to Neodesha to make our mark and continue the ride all the way to Wamego. The course and weather will be interesting, but we're ready to run."

Louisburg cross country finishes third at home invitational



Louisburg freshman Maddox McGhee recorded the seventh-fastest time in school history last Thursday at the Wildcats' home invitational.

Both the Louisburg boys and girls cross country teams turned in strong performances at their home meet last Thursday, each finishing third overall at Lewis-Young Park.

The Wildcat girls scored 69 points to claim third at the Louisburg Invitational, doing so without one of their key runners, sophomore Hailey Shelton. Even with the lineup adjustment, Louisburg's younger runners stepped up in a big way – led by freshman Maddox McGhee, who continues to make her mark on the program's history.

McGhee placed eighth overall in 21 minutes, 37 seconds, a time that moves her to No. 7 on Louisburg's all-time leaderboard. Fellow freshman Karissa Williamson also earned a medal, finishing 11th in 22:14.

"The girls team continues to amaze me," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "With not all runners there, we have to have the 'Next Girl Up' mentality to be successful and we did that. Maddox ran a great race to put herself on the top 7 all-time leaderboard."

Sophomore Reese Smith just missed the podium with a 16th-place time of 22:55, while Annie Hornberger (18th, 23:21) and Talen McMurray (21st, 23:58) completed the team's top five. Felicity Allen rounded out the varsity lineup in 30th (24:49).

Spring Hill won the girls crown with 34 points and Blue Valley Northwest was second with 56.



Louisburg's Titus Ellison was one of four Wildcat boys to earn

medals last Thursday at their home invitational.

The boys team also brought home a third-place finish with 79 points, powered by four medalists in the top 15. Senior Truman Ellison led the way in 11th (18:12), followed closely by Titus Ellison (13th, 18:45), Levi Cotter (14th, 18:48) and Spencer Mattison (15th, 18:50).

"The boys are running great and look to continue improving as a team and individually," Reece said. "Competition is second to their mindset as they are thriving within the team and good things will happen. This holds true for both boys and girls teams."

Freshmen August Meyer (27th, 20:58) and Matthew Lien (33rd, 23:17) rounded out the Wildcats' effort.

Spring Hill earned the boys crown with 24 points and Blue Valley Northwest was second with 38.

Louisburg now turns its focus to the championship stretch, beginning with the Frontier League Invitational on Thursday morning at the Baldwin Golf Course. Races are set to start at 10 a.m.

Wildcat girls win Ramsey Invite title, boys finish runner-up



The Louisburg girls cross country team of (from left) Reese Smith, Talen McMurray, Karissa Williamson, Hailey Shelton, Maddox McGhee, Felicity Allen and Annie Hornberger won the Ramsey Invitational last week.

LA CYGNE – It was a dominant showing for the Louisburg cross country teams last Thursday at the Ramsey Invitational, held at Prairie View High School, as the Wildcat girls claimed the team title and the boys brought home a runner-up plaque.

Led by a strong pack of underclassmen and top-10 finishes from four runners, the Louisburg girls captured the team championship with 24 points, outpacing second-place Fort Scott, who finished with 52.

Freshman Karissa Williamson was the individual star of the day, winning the girls race in 21 minutes, 59 seconds. Fellow freshman Maddox McGhee was just steps behind in second place with a time of 22:04, giving the Wildcats a powerful 1-2 punch up front.

"On the girls side, we continue to improve individually which is really helping the team aspect of our sport," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "The girls are working together at the beginning of the race well and then moving when needed to improve our team place."

Sophomore Hailey Shelton placed fifth in 22:40, and junior Talen McMurray crossed the line eighth in 23:30. Rounding out the team scoring were Reese Smith (13th, 23:50), Felicity Allen (14th, 23:55), and Annie Hornberger (17th, 24:34), giving Louisburg a deep and balanced performance that secured the victory.

The Wildcat boys also made a strong statement, finishing second overall with 35 points, just behind Jayhawk-Linn, who won the meet with 24.



The Louisburg boys cross country team of (from left) Matthew Lien, August Meyer, Levi Cotter, Truman Ellison, Spencer Mattison and Titus Ellison took second at Prairie View last week.

"On the boys side, we are also improving individually, and our young runners are gaining experience and momentum as we move towards the end of the season," Reece said.

Louisburg had four runners place in the top 10, led by Levi Cotter, who finished fourth with a time of 18:53. Truman Ellison (6th, 19:02) and Titus Ellison (7th, 19:05) packed in close behind, while Spencer Mattison rounded out the top 10 with a ninth-place finish in 19:41.

August Meyer placed 18th in 21:41 and Matthew Lien took 26th in 23:21 to complete the team scoring.

It was a successful day for the Wildcat program, with both squads earning hardware and showcasing the depth and potential that could make for an exciting postseason run.

"Even though this is a smaller meet, we performed very well," Reece said. "Both teams earning a plaque was outstanding."

Louisburg is back in action this Thursday as it travels to Topeka for the Perry-Lecompton Invitational. Events begin at 5 p.m.

Wildcat girls take third at Wellsville Invite, medal six overall



The Louisburg girls cross country team of (from left) Annie Hornberger, Felicity Allen, Karissa Williamson, Reese Smith, Maddox McGhee, Hailey Shelton and Talen McMurray took third last week at the Wellsville Invitational.

WELLSVILLE – The Louisburg cross country teams continued to make strides last Thursday at the Wellsville Invitational, with the Wildcat girls turning in one of their strongest performances of the season.

Louisburg placed third overall in the girls team standings with 81 points, finishing just eight points behind meet champion Paola in a tightly contested race. Four Wildcat runners earned medals, led by standout freshman Maddox McGhee, who crossed the line in 10th place with a time of 22:21.

Another freshman, Karissa Williamson, wasn't far behind, securing a 15th-place finish in 22:56. Sophomore teammates Hailey Shelton (19th, 23:22) and Reese Smith (22nd, 23:45) rounded out the medal-winning performances for the Wildcats.

"Maddox has been a force to be reckoned with so far," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "Both her and Karissa are crushing it. Even though we were a touch off on our race execution at Wellsville, she turned an awesome second and third mile to move well up in the standings and lead the team. All the girls worked hard and were rewarded with season bests or matched their best times so far."

Annie Hornberger (35th, 24:37) and Talen McMurray (36th, 24:44) provided strong support in the team scoring, while Felicity Allen finished 40th in 25:05 to cap off the varsity effort.

"The girls' team finish was a testament to their execution of the coach's crazy plan to run a tempo type race as we had just raced on Saturday at Wamego," Reece said. "A short turn around after Wamego is not ideal so we utilize the day to learn how we race instead of just racing again and hope for the best."

On the boys side, the Wildcats had two individual medalists. Junior Titus Ellison led the team with a 23rd-place finish in 19:35, and junior Spencer Mattison was close behind in 25th with a time of 19:43. Junior Levi Cotter narrowly missed out on a medal, placing 26th in 19:47.

Freshman August Meyer finished 40th in 21:18, while junior Truman Ellison (48th, 22:15) and freshman Matthew Lien (56th, 23:23) also contributed solid performances for the boys' squad.

"Some of the boys were working a tempo like the girls team and also showed positive results and medaled in the process," Reece said. "Spencer was coming off of some illness and put in a great performance to get back in the groove. We put together all six runners to field a varsity team and we are proud of how the freshman boys, August and Matthew, stepped up and answered the call to the next level."

Louisburg is back in action Thursday as it travels to the

Prairie View Invitational. Races begin at 3:30 p.m.

Week 3 Athlete of the Week: Maddox McGhee



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week three of the fall sports season, sponsored by IronHorse Family and Cosmetic Dentistry.

MADDOX MCGHEE, FRESHMAN, CROSS COUNTRY

Louisburg's Maddox McGhee is off to a great start in her Wildcat cross country career. The Louisburg freshman has medaled in all three races so far this season and that

continued last Thursday as she medaled 10th at the Wellsville Invitational in a time of 22 minutes and 21 seconds. She also helped the Wildcat girls to a third place team finish.

Earlier in the season, McGhee also medaled at the competitive Wamego Invitational where she took 39th out of 119 runners and opened the season with a medal at the Jerry Howarter Invitational in Garnett.

The athlete of the week award is announced every Wednesday morning during the fall season and the winner is selected by Louisburg Sports Zone with the help of nominations from coaches.

Previous winner:

Week 1: Owen Marsh

Week 2: Caileigh Kilgore



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