

Moore, Johnson earn state medals, Lady Cats take fifth



Louisburg junior Trinity Moore makes her way toward the finish line Saturday during the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships at Wamego Country Club. Moore finished fourth in the state and teammate Reese Johnson was sixth.

WAMEGO – It was going to be hard for the Louisburg High School girls cross country team to duplicate its magical season of 2017.

Not only did the Lady Cats qualify their team for state for the first time in program history, but they also had a top five finisher in Trinity Moore.

Fast forward to 2018, Louisburg wasn't able to match that successful run – the Lady Cats took it a step further.

Moore, along with freshman Reese Johnson, each had a top 10 finish during the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships at Wamego Country Club, and it is the first time in school history that two female runners had medaled at a state meet. Louisburg added on to that as the girls finished fifth in the team standings with 154 points, which is also the highest finish in school history.

Baldwin won the state title with 51 points and Eudora was runner-up with 81. Buhler was third at 107 and Bishop Miege

was fourth with 128 points.

"It was fantastic to finish in fifth place," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "We ran well and ran our races. From No. 1 to No. 7 is a gap, but our gap was less than other teams and putting two runners in the top 10 was the big difference between last year and this year. We are only losing one of the top 5 runners so next year could be special again."



The Louisburg girls cross country team took fifth at state on Saturday. Standing (from left) are head coach John Reece, Shaylor Whitham, Kaitlyn Lewer, Kennady Wilkerson, Trinity Moore, Delaney Wright, Carlee Gassman, Reese Johnson and assistant coach Arianne Seidl.

Moore, who finished fifth at state a year ago, bested her performance by one place as she took fourth with one of her better performances of the season. Johnson was right behind her as she crossed the finish line in sixth to earn a state medal as a freshman.

"Coach A (Arianne Seidl) and I were elated with the girls efforts and for Trinity and Reese to both be top 10 was amazing," Reece said. "I felt they would both medal, but did not see them finishing as well as they did. We are starting to develop an expectation of high performance, not a hope.

"Trinity and Reese both ran smart races. They did not go out with the front girls and let the race come to them. When it did they were poised to move through the field and they did. You always want the best to be your last race and I think it was for them, but they both said there were places that they might have run different that might have placed them differently. I liked that as that tells me they are breaking down their races and are always looking to make themselves better."

Moore ran strong in the 96-runner field as she ran a time of 20 minutes and 15 seconds and her fourth place finish is now the highest state cross country finish in school history.

Chapman sophomore Taylor Briggs won the individual state title in 18:57 and Bishop Miege senior Fallon Russsell was second in 19:43. Eudora's Riley Hiebert was third at 20:03.

"Overall, I think I ran pretty well," Moore said. "The race felt like it went by really fast. I was able to push through the hills and then surge going out of them. Placing one spot higher makes me feel like I have worked harder, and overall had a better season than last year. I know I have gotten better and had my teammates there to push me all year, so it feels great.

"The race was really intense with the girls competing. I knew I had to work really hard to accomplish my goal of doing better than last year. The weather was really nice so it didn't affect how I felt during the race. Wamego is a challenging course with hills, but I was able to push through them and could pass people while doing it. I am glad I was

able to push myself against the competition and have a great race."



Freshman Reese Johnson runs down a straightaway Saturday at Wamego.

As for Johnson, she didn't perform like it was her first state meet. She finished just a few seconds behind Moore to take sixth overall in 20:20.

Johnson went stride for stride with Abilene's Sydney Burton toward the finish line, but Burton just edged Johnson for fifth in a photo finish.

"I was overly excited to finish sixth," Johnson said. "I was expecting good results, but not that good. I was really proud of myself and my team. As a freshman, I am just so happy to have done so well."

"When I found out that our team got fifth, I was super excited. I did not think we were going to do that well, but I know that next year we can get in the top three. Having Trinity to run against always helps me go faster because it gives me a challenge and a reason. I really like racing against her and she is a big part of the runner I am. I am so proud of her for reaching her goal."

To get that fifth place finish, the Lady Cats were going to have to other runners step up and they were able to do that. Junior Carlee Gassman was third on the team and took 34th overall in 22:01.

Senior Shaylor Whitham (24:13) and freshman Delaney Wright (24:19) were 78th and 79th, respectively. Senior Kaitlyn Lewer (25:03) was 85th and sophomore Kennady Wilkerson (27:57) was 96th.

"I knew we were going to go out and have the race of our lives," Moore said. "When coach ran over to us and said we got fifth, we all jumped in the air and had a huge group hug. Reese finishing sixth made me super happy. She has had an amazing season and has worked so hard all year. She is an amazing runner and she has great determination."

It was a great way for Whitham and Lewer to end their Wildcat running careers, according to coach Reese.

"Our seniors this year were awesome," Reese said. "The three years that I coached Shaylor and Kaitlyn were wonderful. They brought great leadership to the team and showed it during practice and races. I was so happy for them to end their cross country careers at the pinnacle of the season by running at the state meet. They will be greatly missed."

"It was a special year yet again. I want to thank the runners as they were a great group to work with. The parents again

supported the team with dinners and snacks and a great cheering section that literally moved from place to place at the meets.”



Louisburg's Trinity Moore gives teammate Reese Johnson a hug as she crossed the finish line Saturday at the state meet. (Photo courtesy of Adam Trower)

The Lady Cats are already looking forward to next season as they will return five of the top seven runners from this year's team as they try for an even bigger finish at state.

“After this year I am pumped to run again,” Johnson said. “I can't even begin to explain how much I already miss practice and I miss the team so much. Next year I am hoping to do even better. Running has become a new passion of mine and I am going to keep running during the off-season. I can't wait to keep getting better and these next few years are going to be

great."

Moore couldn't agree more.

"This season has given me a lot of momentum for next year," Moore said. "Even with our first two races getting cancelled this season, I think I was able to work hard to better my personal record and have a great season. My teammates have pushed me really hard and I know they will do the same next year."

Regional runner-up finish sends Lady Cats to state



Members of the Louisburg girls cross country team hoists their regional runner-up trophy following last Saturday Class 4A regional in Ottawa. The Lady Cats qualified for state for the second consecutive season.

OTTAWA – As runner after runner crossed the finish line during the Class 4A regional meet in Ottawa, doubt began to creep in the minds of the Louisburg High School girls cross country team.

The Lady Cats were hoping to finish in the top three of the

team standings and earn a state berth for the second straight season. Louisburg wasn't sure if the results were going to be good enough to equal last year's third place regional finish.

It turned out the Lady Cats had nothing to worry about.

Not only did Louisburg finish in the top three, but the Lady Cats recorded the best finish in school history as they took second with 75 points at the Eisenhower Road Course, 10 points ahead of third-place Paola. Baldwin won the girls regional with 40 points.

Moore, Reese Johnson, Carlee Gassman, Shaylor Whitham, Delaney Wright, Kaitlyn Lewer and Emily Williams will all be making the trip to Wamego this Saturday for the Class 4A state meet.



Louisburg runners and coaches celebrate the announcement of their regional runner-up finish.

"I am just so thrilled that we were able to qualify again as a team," junior Trinity Moore said. "We have worked so hard this year. We were kind of worried because we didn't know where we were going to finish. We just had to go out and run our race. When we found out we made it, we were all just overly ecstatic. We have worked so hard and to finish second is great."

Along with the Lady Cats' regional runner-up finish, they also had two runners finish in the top three individually. Johnson passed Moore late in the race to finish second overall in 22 minutes and 8 seconds, and was five seconds in front of Moore, who ran a 22:13 to come in third.

It was the first time this season that Johnson, a freshman, eclipsed her teammate in a race as both runners have been pushing each other in practice.



**Louisburg freshman Reese Johnson
leads a pack of runners up a hill
Saturday in Ottawa.**

"I was not expecting it at all," Johnson said of her second place finish. "Everyone was telling me I could beat Trinity and I was able to do it. To me, this was my favorite course so far, even though everyone else hated it. I loved it. I just controlled myself in the middle and took it up the hill.

"Trinity and I are good friends now. We are always running together at practice and we are hanging out all the time. I was always too scared to pass her cause I knew with her competitive side that she would pass me. It is kind of cool that we can race against each other like that."

Although the finish might have surprised Johnson, it didn't surprise her coach as he has seen her progress all season.

"Reese is a go-getter," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "There is a lot of gas in that tank and there isn't anything that is going to stop her. She is going to push through anything and it was just an outstanding race for her. The sky is the limit for her and I think she is going to perform well at state."



Junior Trinity Moore gets ready to take on one of the many hills at the Ottawa course.

As good as Johnson and Moore ran for the Lady Cats, it was the middle three runners that helped secure the Lady Cats' state bid.

Gassman was third on the Louisburg team with a 15th place finish in 23:47, while Whitham finished 25th in 24:49. Wright took 31st overall in 25:36. Lewer (26:34) and Williams (27:52) took 36th and 40th, respectively.

"It was amazing," coach Reece said. "I really had no clue that we would get second. For a long time I thought we were fighting for third. Our three, four and five runners were really huge for us.

"Delaney, Shaylor and Carlee stepped up and had the race of their lives. They ran smart races. They started out like we wanted them to, nice and comfortable, they worked through the middle and ended up passing a lot of kids. The game plan worked."

The Louisburg boys saw its season come to an end Saturday in Ottawa as the Wildcats took seventh with 163 points. Iola won the regional with 49 points, El Dorado was second with 51 and Fort Scott was fourth with 84.



Junior Anthony Davis led the Louisburg boys with his 27th place finish.

Junior Anthony Davis was the highest finisher for Louisburg as he took 27th in 20:31. Sophomore Cade Holtzen was 29th in 20:39 and junior Evan Murphy took 32nd in 20:49.

Sophomore Carson Houchen (21:26) and freshman Ben McKain (21:39) took 37th and 38th, respectively. Seniors Gareth Baus (22:03) and Jackson Staab (24:28) took 42nd and 54th.

As for the Lady Cats, they hope to put together their best performance of the season Saturday during the Class 4A state meet at the Wamego Country Club. The 4A girls race is scheduled to run at 12:55 p.m.

After running as a team at state last season, and Moore finishing fifth overall to earn her second state medal, Louisburg is hoping for even bigger things this time around and a few less nerves.

“I think it will be huge for the girls that went to state last year to show the ones that didn’t run there last year and help them out,” coach Reece said. “I think when you have girls like Trinity, Carlee and Kaitlyn who ran it last year, I don’t think there will be those nerves this year, and that will help the ones who didn’t run like Reese, Delaney and Shaylor. They will have a good group to lean on.”

For a photo gallery from the regional meet, make sure to click [here](#).



PHOTO GALLERY: LHS girls cross country qualifies for state



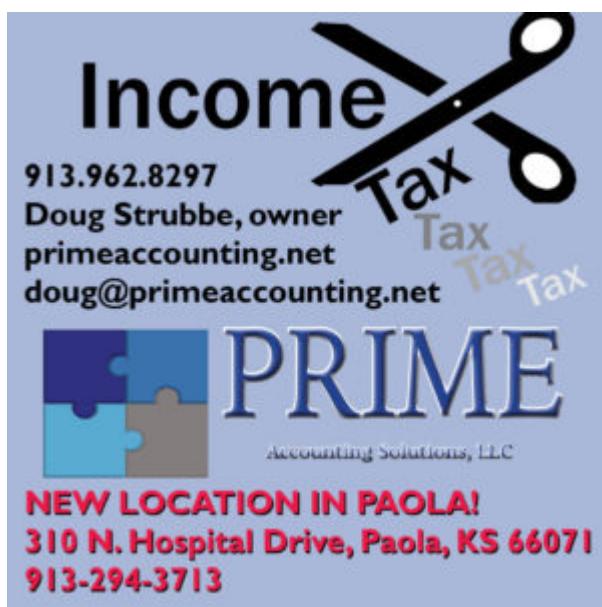
Members of the Louisburg girls cross country team (from left) are Kaitlyn Lewer, Shaylor Whitham, Reese Johnson, Trinity Moore, Delaney Wright, Carlee Gassman, Emily Williams and

alternate Kennedy Wilkerson pose with the Class 4A regional runner-up plaque Saturday in Ottawa.

The Louisburg High School girls cross country team is headed back to the Class 4A state meet this weekend in Wamego. The Lady Cats finished second at the regional meet in Ottawa last Saturday and qualified the entire team for state.

Trinity Moore, Reese Johnson, Carlee Gassman, Shaylor Whitham, Delaney Wright, Kaitlyn Lewer and Emily Williams led the Lady Cats to their first ever regional runner-up trophy. Louisburg also added a pair of individual medalists as Johnson finished second overall and Moore was third on what was a difficult, hilly Ottawa course.

Here is a photo gallery from Saturday's meet, which also included the Wildcat boys' final race of the season. The Lady Cats are scheduled to run at 12:55 p.m. this Saturday at the Wamego Country Club. Congrats again to all the runners!











Junior Trinity Moore gets ready to take on one of the many hills at the Ottawa course.





Louisburg freshman Reese Johnson leads a pack of runners up a hill Saturday in Ottawa.





























Louisburg runners and coaches celebrate the announcement of their regional runner-up finish.









Moore, Johnson earn medals at Frontier League meet



Louisburg junior Trinity Moore gets off to a good start last Thursday during the Frontier League Invitational in Baldwin

City. Moore finished third overall and earned first team all-league honors.

BALDWIN CITY – The Louisburg High School girls cross country team made history a season ago when Trinity Moore became the first Wildcat runner to win a Frontier League title.

Now back at the same course a year later, the Lady Cats once again made a name for themselves.

For the first time in school history, the Louisburg girls had two runners finish in the top five of the Frontier League Invitational. Moore, a junior, finished third and freshman Reese Johnson was fifth last Thursday at the Baldwin City Golf Course.

Both runners earned first team all-league honors with their performance and sit among the best in what is a talented Frontier League field.

"It was awesome to have both Trinity and Reese be recognized as first team all-league," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "It is a tough league and to be recognized all-league is a feat in itself."

Moore, who finished atop the Frontier League last season, eclipsed her time from a year ago to finish third in 19 minutes and 57 seconds. Moore battled Paola's Darian Hudgeons most of the race, but came up just short as Hudgeons took second in 19:54.

Eudora's Riley Hiebert won the girls race in 19:31, but Moore competed hard despite being out of practice with a foot injury in the days leading up to the race.

"Trinity ran a great race for being a little banged up," Reece said. "She ran 15 seconds faster than last year and the competition was even better than last year. That is the

reality of cross country and how every race is different.”



Freshman Reese Johnson heads toward the finish line last Thursday in Baldwin. Johnson took fifth overall and earned first team all-league honors in the process.

In her first varsity season, Johnson has run her way toward the top of the Frontier League. She finished fifth in 20:17 and started near the front of the pack from the beginning and didn't let up.

“Nothing surprises me with Reese,” coach Reece said. “She is a competitive kid who goes for it every time. She has figured out the sport and the sky is the limit as she gets stronger and gains even more experience.”

As for the rest of the Lady Cats, Louisburg finished fifth in the team standings with 106 points. Baldwin won the league crown with 37 points and Eudora was second with 63.

Junior Carlee Gassman finished third on the Louisburg team and was 35th overall in 22:29. Senior Shaylor Whitham (22:53) and freshman Delaney Wright (22:55) took 39th and 40th, respectively. Junior Emily Williams was 68th in 25:17.

On the boys side, junior Anthony Davis led Louisburg in 32nd to finish in 19:18 and sophomore Cade Holtzen was right behind him with a time of 19:19 and took 33rd.

Junior Evan Murphy came in 39th in 19:38 to finish third on the Wildcat team. Sophomore Carson Houchen (20:07) and freshman Ben McKain (20:09) took 51st and 52, respectively.



Louisburg sophomore Carson Houchen leads a pack of runners last Thursday during the league meet.

Senior Gareth Baus took 67th overall in 20:59, while sophomore Tyler Detherage (21:33) and senior Jackson Staab (22:33) finished 79th and 87th.

The junior varsity runners ran in a combined race with the varsity and freshman Malee Rutherford was the top Louisburg girls JV finisher as she took 65th in 25 minutes.

Louisburg will now prep for what will be the final race of the season for some. The Wildcats will compete in the Class 4A regional race in Ottawa, which begins at 11 a.m., on Saturday at the Eisenhower Road Course. The course features several steep hills and provides several challenges for the runners.

The Lady Cats will try to qualify for state as a team for the second straight season after finishing third at regionals a year ago.

"We hope to qualify the girls team for state again," Reece said. "The goal is to be top three at regionals, which will be a tough go. There is an outside chance that we could qualify a boy too as Anthony has really improved this year. The course will be tamed by our runners and we will conquer all because we will be mental in the middle and finish strong."

Wildcats medal five at home meet, Lady Cats finish second



Louisburg freshman Reese Johnson (right) gets off to a good start Thursday during the Louisburg Invitational, while teammate Carlee Gassman was right behind her at Lewis-Young Park.

The Louisburg High School cross country team put its best foot forward Thursday during its home meet – literally.

Several Wildcats ran personal best times as they racked up five medals in the Louisburg Invitational and the runners had a chance to shine on their home course at Lewis-Young Park.

As a team, the Louisburg girls took full advantage of running on a familiar course as the Lady Cats finished second in the team standings with 55 points. Junior Trinity Moore, freshman Reese Johnson, junior Carlee Gassman, freshman Delaney Wright, senior Shaylor Whitham and senior Kaitlyn Lewer earned team medals for the fourth time this season.

Individually, Moore, Johnson and Gassman earned medals for the Lady Cats, while juniors Anthony Davis and Evan Murphy snagged medals on the boys side.

Moore had the best run of her career, time-wise, as she broke her own school record with a time of 19 minutes and 46 seconds to finish second overall. Paola's Darian Hudgeons was first in 19:42 and it was Paola that won the team title with 46 points, while Fort Scott was third, just one point behind Louisburg.

Johnson, a freshman, improved on her season best time to run a 20:25 to take fifth and Gassman also set a new personal-best

time of 21:02 to take seventh. Wright (22:23) and Whitham (22:45) also had personal best times as they finished 22nd and 23rd, respectively, while Lewer (23:36) was 30th.



Freshman Delaney Wright leads a pack of runners around a turn Thursday at Lewis-Young Park.

"The girls performance was solid," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "I thought Trinity ran a great race and I think she did everything she could to finish first. Reese improved again on her time and I think Carlee ran fantastic.

"Our four and five runners have to continue to work hard and they are going to be the ones we lean on for a chance to be a state qualifier. They are getting better and better. Shaylor is bringing it this year as a senior and it is awesome."

Davis and Murphy led the Louisburg boys as both earned medals.

Davis finished 11th in 18 minutes and 49 seconds and Murphy was 14th in 19:05.

Sophomore Cade Holtzen was nearly the third Wildcat boy to medal, but was edged out at the finish line by Spring Hill's Chase Rooney in less than a half of a second and took 16th in 19:06.04.



Junior Anthony Davis was one of two Wildcat boys to earn a medal during the Louisburg Invitational.

Sophomore Carson Houchen finished 20th overall in 19:49 and freshman Ben McKain was 23rd in 20:11. Seniors Jackson Staab (21:32) and Gareth Baus (21:53) rounded out the Wildcat team in 30th and 32nd, respectively.

"It was definitely nice to see the boys have some success with

Evan and Anthony both getting their medals and Cade almost got one, just missing out in the end," Reece said. "Those guys weren't even close last year for medals so it was nice to see them get up there."

Spring Hill's Braxton Dixon won the meet with a time of 17:32 and the Broncos also won the team title with 22 points. Paola was second with 57, Fort Scott was third with 82 and Louisburg was fourth at 84.

In the junior varsity races, the Louisburg girls picked up four medals on the day. Kennady Wilkerson finished fourth to lead the Lady Cats, while Alexis French, Malee Rutherford and Ruth Minster also medaled seventh, ninth and 10th, respectively.

The regular season is now over for Louisburg as it focuses on the league meet this Thursday in Baldwin and then will travel to Ottawa for the regional meet on Oct. 20.



Louisburg sophomore Carson Houchen recorded a top 20 finish Thursday.

The Wildcats will battle Baldwin and Paola for a league crown, while Louisburg will also square off with the two league opponents, along with Fort Scott, at regionals. The Lady Cats will compete with those three programs, among others, as they try to qualify for state as a team for the second straight season.

“Baldwin is a great course because you can run fast there,” Reese said. “It is a challenging course because there are rollers, but it is going to give us another chance to run against Paola and run against Baldwin and see how we stack up.

“Looking at our regional with Paola, Fort Scott and us all being there, our home meet gave us a good feel for what we are going to do. League will give us another good feel because Baldwin will be there, so it is looking positive since we were

able to beat Fort Scott again this season by a few points. We have to keep getting better."

Lady Cats finish third at Pittsburg, earn two individual medals



Louisburg junior Carlee Gassman was one of several runners who helped the Lady Cat cross country team to a third-place finish at the Pittsburg Invitational.

PITTSBURG – The Louisburg High School girls cross country team made it 3-for-3 in team medals following its performance Thursday at the Pittsburg Invitational.

The Lady Cats earned a top three finish for the third time this season as they took third overall with 86 points, just six points behind runner-up Paola. Carl Junction (Mo.) won the meet with 40 points.

Louisburg continued its improvement at Four Oaks Golf Course in just its third meet of the season. The Lady Cats medaled two individual runners as junior Trinity Moore and freshman Reese Johnson shaved time off their season best.

Moore medaled sixth overall with a time of 19 minutes and 54 seconds as she medaled in the top 10 for the third time this year.

Johnson also made her way up the top times in Louisburg High School history. The Louisburg freshman finished in 19:56, which was good for eighth overall and moved her to No. 2 all-time on the LHS leaderboard.

“The girls team continues to improve and move forward as a group,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “Our third place finish matched last year, but I feel like we ran even better as a team than last year. Reese and Trinity continue to push the limits and race great. Carlee (Gassman), Reese and Trinity train together on all pace work so the take that into meets and race well together.”

Junior Carlee Gassman finished in the top 20, just a few spots out of a medal. Gassman finished in 19th with a time of 21:11 and freshman teammate Delaney Wright was 28th in 21:53.

Senior Shaylor Whitham was 30th in 22:11, while junior Emily Williams (23:32) and senior Kaitlyn Lewer (23:58) took 43rd and 48th, respectively, out of 77 runners.

On the boys side, junior Anthony Davis led the Wildcat runners with a time of 18:35 to finish 28th overall. Junior Evan Murphy was second on the team in 18:48 to take 35th and sophomore Cade Holtzen was right behind him in 37th with a time of 18:51.

Sophomore Carson Houchen (19:48) took 61st and freshman Ben McKain (20:25) was 74th. Seniors Gareth Baus (20:38) and Jackson Staab (22:36) rounded out the Wildcat team in 82nd and 98th, respectively.

"The boys made great gains both individually and as a team," Reece said. "Anthony, Cade and Evan have been working great together and they race well together which showed at Pitt.

"The team did great as a whole. Pittsburg's course is fairly flat which makes for fast times. The biggest challenge is that the course is flat and you have to push the whole race, no down hills to really relax."

In the junior varsity girls race, sophomore Kennady Wilkerson finished sixth in 24:14 to lead Louisburg.

The Wildcats are back in action this Thursday when it hosts the Louisburg Invitational at Lewis-Young Park. The meet is set to begin at 4 p.m.

Lady Cats, Moore win titles at Prairie View



Members of the Louisburg girls cross country team are (from left) Ruth Minster, JV winner Kennady Wilkerson, Trinity Moore, Delaney Wright, Reese Johnson, Emily Williams, Kaitlyn Lewer and Shaylor Whitham. The Lady Cats won the team title Thursday at Prairie View.

It didn't come as a complete shock to Louisburg cross country coach John Reece when it was announced that his girls team had won the Ramsey Invitational title.

Actually, he would have been shocked if the announcement had been anything but the top spot.

"I hate to say it, but I expected them to win the meet," Reece said. "There were no exceptions, we were there to win again and we did."

The Lady Cats tallied 32 points and finished four points ahead of runner-up Anderson County to win the Prairie View High School meet for the fourth consecutive season. Trinity Moore, Reese Johnson, Delaney Wright, Shaylor Whitham, Kaitlyn Lewer, Emily Williams and Ruth Minster all ran the Lady Cats to a gold medal finish.

Although this was nothing new for several of the runners, it didn't mean they were any less excited about it.

"It feels great to have gotten first again as a team," Moore said. "We are working really hard this year and it has showed. It felt a little different without our seniors from last year, but we came out and worked very hard."

Not only did the Lady Cats earn top honors, but Moore took first individually in what was a photo finish.



Trinity Moore (right) battles Central Heights' Lily Meyer right to the finish line Thursday at Prairie View.

Moore ran side by side with Central Heights freshman Lily Meyer for the final 50 meters of the race and it was too close to call at the finish line. When the results came out, Moore won by two-hundredths of a second with a time of 20 minutes and 50.08 seconds.

"The finish was very interesting," Moore said. "I am not a sprinter, so I wasn't sure if I got her at the end. She was close behind me the entire race and when I heard her come up so close to the finish, I just gave it everything. That was the fastest I think I have ever run."

That result also didn't surprise Reece as he knows the type of runner Moore is and the type of race she is capable of

running.

"Trinity did make an early move and then the girl (Meyer) answered and then it came down to guts and Trinity is a fierce competitor and it did not surprise me that she won it," Reece said. "Trinity is still learning how to manage races and I think she learned a lot at Prairie View on how to handle being in the front pack."

Along with Moore, two other Lady Cats also brought home individual medals. For the second straight week, freshman Reese Johnson won a varsity medal as she took fourth overall in 21:44.



Freshman Delaney Wright finished 10th overall for Louisburg and earned her first medal.

Another freshman, Delaney Wright, captured her first varsity

medal in 23:56 to take 10th overall. Senior Shaylor Whitham missed a medal by one spot as she took 16th in 25:04.

Senior Kaitlyn Lewer and junior Emily Williams took 18th and 19th in 25:16 and 26:05, respectively. Freshman Ruth Minster was 28th in 29:40.

The Louisburg boys also fared well at Prairie View and had two runners earn medals.

Junior Anthony Davis finished 13th overall to earn a varsity medal in 19:47 and sophomore Cade Holtzen was 15th with a time of 19:57. As a team, the Wildcats were fourth overall with 88 points and missed out on team medals by four points.

“Anthony and Cade did great and both earned well deserved medals,” Reece said. “The sky is the limit for all the runners it is just a matter of letting themselves soar to the upper limits and beyond.”



Louisburg's Evan Murphy (left) and Ben McKain lead a pack of runners during Thursday's meet at Prairie View High School.

Junior Evan Murphy was third on the team with a time of 20:45 to finish 21st overall and sophomore Carson Houchen was 23rd in 20:54. Freshman Ben McKain took 25th in 21:08 and sophomore Tyler Detherage ran a 26:10 and came in 35th.

Thanks to some inclement weather, this was only the second race of the season for Louisburg as it had two cancelled to start the year. Still, Reece believe his team is right on track to where it needs to be.

"I think we are in a great position to finish the season strong even though we missed a few races that could have helped the younger runners," he said. "We have great leaders and it is showing as we continue to push towards state. This

is a great bunch of kids and they are committed to being the best they can be."

On the junior varsity side, Louisburg also came away with medals on the girls side.

Sophomore Kennady Wilkerson won the junior varsity girls race in 26:15 to earn top honors. Sophomore Alexis French was fifth in 27:32, junior Natalie George was seventh in 27:49 and senior Molly Rison was 10th in 28:33.

Louisburg returns to action this Thursday when it travels to the Pittsburg Invitational. The meet is set to begin at 4 p.m. at Four Oaks Golf Course

Lady Cats finish third in season opener at Wellsville



Louisburg runners (from left) Trinity Moore, Carlee Gassman and Reese Johnson all earned individual medals Thursday during the Wellsville Invitational. The Lady Cats also earned team medals as they finished third overall.

WELLSVILLE – The wait is finally over, and for the Louisburg High School cross country team, it couldn't have come soon

enough.

Mother Nature dampened the start of the Wildcats' season as two meets were cancelled to begin the year and delayed their 2018 campaign by two weeks. Despite that, Louisburg was more than ready to run Thursday at the Wellsville Invitational – especially on the girls side.

The Lady Cats earned team medals in their first time out as they finished third overall with 67 points and edged out Fort Scott by a point. West Franklin won the meet with 49 points and Spring Hill was second with 51.

Trinity Moore, Reese Johnson, Carlee Gassman, Delaney Wright, Shaylor Whitham, Emily Williams and Kaitlyn Lewer were all a part of the third-place finish.

"The girls ran well and our young runners learned a lot from their first race," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "They worked together for the first mile or so and then took what the race brought to them. It was a solid finish placing third in a good field of schools."

Moore, who finished fifth at the state meet last season, ran a strong opening race as she took second with a time of 21 minutes and 26 seconds. The Louisburg junior led for much of the back end of the race before being overtaken by Fort Scott's Gabbie Clements.

Johnson, a freshman, didn't let the big stage of her first high school race bother her as she took sixth overall in a time of 22:02 to earn her first varsity medal. It was also the fourth fastest time in program history.

Junior Carlee Gassman also earned an individual medal for the Lady Cats as she took 14th in 22:46.



(From left) Carlee Gassman, Trinity Moore, Emily Williams, Kaitlyn Lewer, Reese Johnson, Shaylor Whitham and Delaney Wright get off to a good start Thursday in the Wellsville Invitational.

"Trinity ran well for her first race out and she knows she has a ways to go, but she will get there," Reece said. "Reese showed she has got it. She ran in the front of the pack well into the third mile and finished strong."

Wright, who was also competing in her first high school race as a freshman, took 30th overall in 24:47. Williams (24:59) and Whitham (25:01) took 33rd and 34th, respectively, while Lewer (26:07) was 41st.

It wasn't the typical start for Louisburg as it normally begins the season on a course that features several difficult hills, but the Wellsville course was a little different and presented some different obstacles.

"It was great to finally race," Reece said. "The kids did great and were all equal or better than their times last year which is very encouraging. Wellsville is not a difficult course, hills wise, but its curvy nature does pose a few

challenges. With that said, it was a good course to start the season."

On the boys side, sophomore Cade Holtzen led the group of Wildcat runners in 37th with a time of 20:19. Junior Evan Murphy was next in 57th with a time of 21:06.

Junior Anthony Davis (21:12) and sophomore Carson Houchen (21:16) finished 59th and 60th, respectively. Seniors Jackson Staab (24:09) and Gareth Baus (24:15) took 73rd and 74th.



Louisburg's Cade Holtzen (left) and Anthony Davis race toward at the front of the pack at the start of the race Thursday in Wellsville.

"The boys did a good job and competed great," Reece said. "We will look to continue our efforts to improve individually as

well as a team and start taking the race to the other teams instead of letting them take the race to us."

Louisburg also picked up a pair of medals in the junior varsity races.

Freshmen Ben McKain and Ruth Minster each earned a medal for their top 15 finish in their respective races. In the boys competition, McKain took seventh overall in 21:06 and Minster was 15th overall on the girls side in 26:41.

The Wildcat runners return to action Thursday when it travels to the Prairie View Invitational. Races are set to begin at 3:30 p.m.

Moore, Lady Cats eye return to state cross country



Louisburg junior Trinity Moore put together the best season for a female runner in Wildcat history as a sophomore as she finished fifth at the state meet and won a Frontier League title.

In the two decade-long history of the program, the Louisburg High School cross country team didn't have a better season

than it did in 2017.

The Wildcats finished with three state medalists at the Class 4A meet in Wamego and qualified the entire girls team for state for the first time in school history. It was a season to remember for Louisburg cross country.

A year later, the Wildcats are without two of their state medalists – Wyatt Reece and Tim Smith – who graduated and also saw some other members of that state qualifying girls team depart as well.

Still, optimism is high for Louisburg, especially on the girls side. The Wildcats return junior Trinity Moore, who finished fifth in the state last season, and is a two-time state medalist.

Louisburg also returns four members from that state qualifying team in Moore, junior Carlee Gassman, junior Emily Williams and senior Kaitlyn Lewer. The Wildcats added several freshman runners to the program who figure to work their way up as the season goes along.

“Practice has been going great,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “We are ready to get started and see how we compare to other schools.

“I think the girls will be even stronger this year. They want to do well for each other, and at the same time, want to beat each other in practice and I’m sure in meets as well. We will have a youthful varsity team against this year. There are several in the running for the top seven spots, and after our first meet we will see who the best performers are.”



Senior Kaitlyn Lewer is one of four returning runners from last season's state qualifying team.

Moore had a strong finish to her 2017 season as she ended as a Frontier League champion, took third in the regional meet and fifth at state in 19 minutes and 47 seconds, which broke her own school record.

As fun as that season was for Moore, she has even bigger expectations this year.

"I really want to improve my time and break 19 minutes," Moore said. "If I work hard and push myself in practice and meets, I know I can accomplish this. I also hope to make it to state again this year with my team. If we work and race our best every week, I think we will be able to make it to state and exceed what we did last year."

"We have very strong runners this year and I know we can make a huge impact just like we did last season. The talent on the girls team is outstanding. We have great returners, with great experience and some fast freshmen that will help the team a lot. I think we will be able to get stronger and faster as a team and hopefully make it to state again."

As a whole, the Wildcats have 26 runners out this season, most of which are on the girls side.

The boys lost their two top runners in Wyatt Reece and Smith, but return junior Evan Murphy, and sophomores Cade Holtzen and Carson Houchen, who logged a lot of varsity miles last season and progressed as the year went along.

"The boys side will be a little different than last year," coach Reece said. "We will still look to improve as individuals, but as far as a team, it will be a lot like last year and we might not field a full team until later in the season.

"Overall, boys and girls, this is an awesome group of kids who will do great things throughout the year."

Louisburg will get its season started Thursday when it travels to the Anderson County Invitational at the Garnett Golf Course. The first race is scheduled to begin at 3:30, with the varsity not slated to begin until close to 6 p.m.

New rules create different vibe for first day of fall

practice



The Louisburg High School football team opened the 2018 season with its first day of practice Monday and did so under different guidelines. Despite that, the Wildcats are excited for the start of the season.

On the horizon, it looked like a normal first day of practice.

More than 150 athletes took to their respective field, court or course to begin their journey to greatness Monday for the 2018 fall sports season. Excitement was abound and coaches were happy to be back with their players.

However, the first day of practice was a little bit different this year as the Kansas High School Activities Association implemented new fall heat acclimation rules in late July. The rules, applied to all sports, includes:

- Only one practice per day is permitted during the first five days of practice. All individuals shall only practice once per day for the first five days the individual practices, no matter when the person joins the team or if the person misses days due to injury/illness.
- No single practice may last longer than three hours. All warm-up, stretching, conditioning and weight lifting is included as part of the three-hour limit.
- A separate walkthrough is permitted in addition to the single practice. The walkthrough cannot be longer than

one hour and must be separated from practice by at least three hours of rest. A walkthrough is defined as a teaching opportunity with the athletes in which no protective equipment is worn. No physically exerting activity, including any conditioning or weight lifting, may take place during the walkthrough.

- Beginning on practice day six, double practice sessions are permitted for any individual who has completed five days of single practices. Double practice sessions cannot be held on consecutive days. The day following a double practice day would be either a single practice day or a rest/recovery day.
- On days of multiple practices, no single practice may last longer than 3 hours and total practice time combined shall not exceed five hours.
- To be deemed a practice, a majority of the squad members must participate in the organized team training session.

Those rules left most of the coaches at Louisburg High School having to readjust how they run their practices or tryouts.

The Wildcat boys soccer team, which normally conditioned in the morning and worked on skills in the afternoon, were forced to cram everything into one practice.

"I am extremely frustrated with the new KSHSAA rule," Louisburg soccer coach Kyle Conley said. "Before to protect the student athletes, we ran in the morning before the sun was up and when it was cooler out. Now we have to practice and condition in the afternoon in the heat of the day. Personally, I fill this will lead to more issues. It would be interesting to see who all was included in this decision and what the data said."



Eli Minster passes a ball to a teammate during a drill Monday during the first official day of practice.

Louisburg volleyball, which also holds tryouts, had to split up the grade levels during the process. Senior and juniors had tryouts in the morning as a group, while sophomores and freshman practiced in the afternoon.

"In the past, we were able to put every athlete, freshman through senior, on the court at the same time and separate out the tested areas," Louisburg volleyball coach Jessica Compliment said. "Physical testing had been in the morning with volleyball skill testing in the afternoon. Due to the change in the rule, we could no longer use that set up.

"It has forced a 'split' in the athletes because they can't all work out together like they have been all summer long. Because of our numbers, and the tests we feel are necessary in order to make cuts and squad roster decisions, we need to run

the athletes through each test. We would not have enough time to do that if we had kept them all together and brought them in for only one session. Which means the athletes are that more anxious and excited to finish tryouts and start the season with their teammates.”

There were also specific rule changes in regards to football, which forced Wildcat coach Robert Ebenstein to adjust his practice schedule as well, including the removal of two-a-days for the first week practice. Other changes include:

- Players must have a minimum of one day of rest/recovery during any week (Sunday- Saturday). Only injury treatments are permitted on a rest/recovery day.
- Days No. 1 and 2 of practice: Helmets only (air and bags only are permitted.)
- Days No. 3 and 4: Helmets and shoulder pads are permitted (Day 3: control permitted; Day 4: thud permitted.)
- Days 5 through Saturday of third week of practice: Full contact (air, bags, control, thud and live action permitted) may begin with exceptions that on any day involving multiple practices, only one practice may involve thud and/or live action.

“The changes with KSHSAA policies are what they are,” Ebenstein said. “I think they were created with good intentions. Personally I feel that our practice tendencies over the last few years have put player safety as the No. 1 priority always, so in that regard not a whole lot will change for us. You are allowed to do a separate ‘walk-through’ other than practice which we will still do every morning at 6 a.m., so we still have that old school two-a-day feeling just the approach of what we do and how we will do it has changed.

“The only thing that confused me is the purpose of the change is for heat acclimation, but the wording of it will force us to condition our players in the afternoon when it is hot

instead of in the morning when it is typically cooler. But most all of our players have been working their tails off all summer and are already in pretty good shape.”

Despite the changes in practice, all four Wildcat programs are excited for what their season has in store. LHS had a large number of participants for the first day of fall practice as 163 athletes participated.

Ebenstein had 70 players attend the first day of practice, which is the highest number the Wildcats have had since he joined the staff in 2012. Louisburg also hopes to improve off its 6-3 record last season as they return 18 seniors, including several starters on both sides of the ball.

“Practice went well and it was good to finally get back on the field with the guys,” Ebenstein said. “We are very excited for this season, as in every team in the state. The thing that separates us is how players, managers and coaches alike all really enjoy our time together. I am excited to coach, but I’m honestly excited to be around these coaches and kids again and give this season the best run we can.”



LHS freshmen and sophomore volleyball players gather at center court during tryouts Monday.

On the volleyball side, the Lady Cats had 34 athletes show up for the first day of tryouts, which will end on Wednesday as Louisburg begins its quest to get back to the state tournament after finishing second a year ago.

“The first couple days are focused on running each athlete through a set of volleyball skills and physical skills tests,” Compliment said. “The athletes did a good job for the first day, and we are looking forward to the next couple of days.

“Over the course of the summer, we had a lot of athletes participate in summer league matches, summer camps, team camps, open gym and weights. They are ready to get the season going. There is a lot of excitement among the athletes and a lot of anticipation for the season.”

Coming off a spot in the state quarterfinals, the Wildcat boys soccer team had 38 athletes compete for a spot on the team as they try to make another run in the playoffs.

"It was nice to see so many kids out for the team," Conley said. "The boys work incredibly hard and we are very supportive of each other. With having so many new players coming out for the team, we did a lot of teaching and developing expectations for the drills and why we do things. It was actually the first time in three years the majority of the team completed the mile under six minutes, which was fantastic."

"It is a great time of the year with a lot of optimism. The boys were very upbeat and very focused on getting better. With only four seniors, we are extremely young and we will need to do a lot of teaching."



Trinity Moore (center) leads a pack of runners during the first day of practice Monday at LHS.

As for cross country, numbers have dwindled a little for head coach John Reece as he has close to 25 runners out this season, but he has a good group of runners coming back, including state medalist Trinity Moore.

The girls team is also hoping to make a return trip to state this season after qualifying for the first time in school history last year.

"The first practice was great," Reece said. "We are going to have more girls than boys, but it seems like they are in shape and ready to start training for our first race.

"The kids are jazzed about the season and the girls are wanting to do even better than last year. I believe success builds the team numbers."