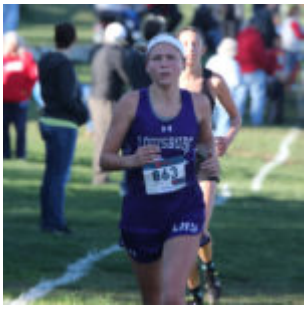
Moore, Johnson earn medals at Frontier League meet



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.



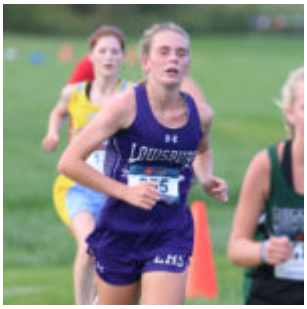
Louisburg sophomore Carson Houchen recorded a top 20 finish Thursday.

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-hundreths 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 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.”

Hinkle ready to take on role as LHS activities director



Walking into Scott Hinkle’s office, it doesn’t appear he started a new job two weeks ago.

The moving boxes are mostly gone. His desk is organized with everything in its place, along with a calendar crammed full of upcoming events.

Hinkle is not shy to tell people about his love for the Boston Red Sox. Sitting on one wall are two older chairs from Fenway Park, along other memorabilia.

The one thing that Hinkle hasn't caught up on is his efforts to get some purple gear. An avid Kansas Jayhawk fan, he hasn't had need to purchase any purple flair in the past. Seems like that will change shortly as he was hired as the new activities director and assistant principal at Louisburg High School earlier this summer.

"I have been a Jayhawk fan all my life," Hinkle said. "It will be a little weird to wear purple that is for sure, but I am sure I will get used to it. Before I left my old job, people found out where I was going so they started giving me little gifts with purple on it, like markers and stuff like that. They definitely got a kick out of that."

Hinkle takes over for Jeremy Holloway, who was promoted to principal at LHS and becomes the third activities director in as many years to take over that spot.

"My wife has family in Kansas City and I have family in Wichita and so we were looking to come this way," Hinkle said. "I had a couple friends that told me that the Louisburg position had opened up. I had heard of Louisburg a long time ago. I actually coached at Ottawa University in the early 90s and was familiar with the area. I came up, interviewed and here I am. It has obviously worked out well.

"Everyone has been so helpful and friendly and it is a good time to be coming to Louisburg. I am excited to be here."

Before taking the job in Louisburg, Hinkle had spent the last 22 years in the Liberal school district in a variety of roles. He served as the boys high school basketball coach, along with nine years as an activities director, a year as the head girls basketball coach at the local community college and last year he served as assistant principal at the high school.

Hinkle graduated from Valley Center High School, and went on from there to earn his bachelor's degree from Friends University, where he played basketball, and his master's from the University of Kansas.

Basketball has always been a passion for Hinkle, but during his time as activities director at Liberal, he had a chance to learn the life of other sports as well.

"Liberal changed a lot from when I first got there in the mid 90s when they were a football and track powerhouse," Hinkle said. "There were just athletes galore, but the culture kind of changed. We were really good in soccer and decent in track and volleyball. We still had good kids and good athletes, but it was a big transition as far as sports go when I first got there. My kids grew up there and being involved and being able to watch their events was something that has always appealed to me.

"Basketball has always been in my blood. Other than my nine years as athletic director, I have coached in some capacity and I am a big basketball fan. Obviously, being an athletic director I am just a big sports fan in general."

Still new in town, Hinkle is still trying to get to know his coaching staff, but he is excited about the situation he is walking into with the Wildcats finishing as state runner-ups in volleyball and girls soccer last season. Several cross country, golf, wrestling and track athletes also earned state medals.

However, if there is one thing he wanted to relay to everyone is that he wants to give his coaches the freedom to run their programs.

"I want to let the coaches, coach," he said. "I am not going to be the guy that says this is how we did things in Liberal and I am not that type of leader. If it comes to the point where they need some advice, I want to be a resource for them.

I don’t want to be someone that is looking for something.

“I have met a few of the coaches. I have let them know that I am here if they need anything. I have stopped by the weight room to speak to a few coaches and some have stopped by to introduce themselves. I am still learning names and faces. We have a coaches meeting on the 10th and I will see and learn a lot more about them then.”

With all the success the Wildcats had last season in the sports arena, Hinkle is happy to be a part of the LHS family and is learning new things about the town every day.

“I have heard all types of things,” he said. “I have heard they take football pretty seriously here. I know they were state runner-up in volleyball and girls soccer last year and that is an exciting thing to walk into. I think expectations are obviously high in those sports, but I think everyone always has high expectations. I am not going to do anything different than normal and I am just going to sit back and observe for a while and take it all in.”

Hinkle will experience some different things along with his new position. This season, the Frontier League will welcome three new teams – Bonner Springs, Piper and Tonganoxie – and will say goodbye to De Soto.

Another big change will be the postseason formats with several sports as the Kansas State High School Activities Association reshuffled their classification system, eliminating Class 4A-Division II.

“With the changes in the league, the classification system and being a new AD, it is probably a good time to be coming on,” Hinkle said. “The learning curve is going to be the same for all of us.

“I walked into a good situation for scheduling because (Holloway) already had everything all taken care of,” he said.

“I think the dynamics of the league are going to change. Liberal’s former girls basketball coach is the coach at Piper and I know a little bit about them. As far as the programs and rivalries, that is something that is going to come with time.”

Even with all the changes in his life – moving, starting a new job, getting to know new faces – Hinkle is ready for what lies ahead and the staff at Louisburg has helped with that transition.

“It has been a whirlwind and it has been information overload,” he said. “It is a lot of the same things I did in Liberal as athletic director, I just haven’t done it for the last five years. Being an assistant principal at Liberal last year, I think, helped me prepare for the principal side.

“People have just gone out of their way to be helpful. From the administration to the custodial staff to the secretaries, everyone has been super helpful. When I was out around town, people have welcomed me and it has been a friendly feel everywhere I have been.”

Holtzen accomplishes rare feat earning 12 varsity letters



Isabelle Holtzen became the first female athlete in Louisburg High School history to earn 12 varsity athletic letters after finishing out her senior season. Holtzen earned letters in cross country, basketball and track and field in each of her four years of high school.

Once Isabelle Holtzen received her diploma and walked out of Louisburg High School for the last time as a student, she officially became one of the most decorated female athletes in school history.

No, she doesn’t have any individual state championships, or even one as part of a team. Holtzen’s decorations aren’t ones in the form of trophies or all-state honors, but instead, they can be found on the front of her letter jacket.

Holtzen became the first female athlete in at least 20 years to earn 12 varsity letters, which means she lettered on the varsity level in three sports in each of her four years of high school.

In research done by Louisburg Sports Zone, it was unable to find the last athlete to accomplish the feat, which could mean Holtzen could be the first Lady Cat to do so.

The last athlete to come close was in 2001 when Krystal Bowes earned 10 varsity letters before moving on to a collegiate track career at Wichita State.

“The biggest thing that it means to me is to just have an opportunity to participate in three sports at a school like Louisburg,” Holtzen said. “The bigger the school that you go to, the harder it is to play multiple sports at the varsity level and I think Louisburg is unique in that fact. The best part of this whole journey was I think my freshman year because there was no pressure and no one was expecting anything from me. It was surprising and exciting to be able to

letter in all three sports.”

Thoughts of finding her way onto the varsity team her freshman year was one she couldn’t even fathom four years ago. She wasn’t experienced in cross country. She enjoyed basketball, but didn’t even dream of playing with the school’s best.

In track, Holtzen would qualify for state in the pole vault for all four years of high school and earned two state medals. It was that sport where she almost didn’t get a letter her freshman year.

It is the same sport where she earned a Division I scholarship offer to pole vault at Northern Iowa University next season.

“I was not very good my freshman year,” Holtzen said. “I wasn’t that great in pole vault and I remember throughout the season that I would add up all my points to see if I was going to have to have enough to letter. I actually barely lettered my freshman year. I think you had to get 20 points and I ended up getting 20.5 or something like that.

“In basketball, I was not expecting to letter at all and it didn’t even cross my mind that it would. We had some really good seniors that year in Natalie Moore, Kirstin Lowry and Kallie O’Keefe and they were all playing at a high level. I just remember standing next to them and I was about 4-5 inches shorter than they were and I felt like a little freshman. I wasn’t expecting to play any varsity at all. I thought freshman and maybe a little JV, so it was surprising when I got a few minutes on the varsity level.”

However, it was in cross country where she first realized that she had more to give and it was thanks in part to a special conversation from a senior.

Holtzen found herself holding back in practice and not wanting to pass the team’s upperclassmen. She was told that things needed to change.



“My freshman year I had some of the best seniors that I have ever gone through here,” Holtzen said. “Mary Kate Roy always pushed me in cross country. One time at practice she pulled me aside and told me that if I want to be faster that you are going to have push yourself and don’t be afraid to go ahead of us.

“Her saying that really impacted me because I was all about running with my friends, but I realized that I needed to push myself for my teammates and have a chance to get team medals and individually get better too. As a scared little freshman, what she said really meant a lot.”

Very quickly, Holtzen found her way to the varsity level in cross country and stayed there through her four years. This past season, Holtzen was on the Lady Cat squad that became the first team in school history to qualify for the Class 4A state meet.

“It is a big accomplishment to earn a varsity letter in any sport, but to do that all four years in three sports is amazing,” Louisburg cross country coach John Reece said. “Most freshmen find themselves waiting their turn to see varsity time and understand their role. Isabelle was looked to by her coaches to step up and fill voids at the varsity level as a freshman and even be a top performer for the team in some cases.

“She was prepared in her athletic skills to do so and also went through the growing pains of mentally developing at the next level of competition. Because of her never quit attitude, she took coaching criticism, both positive and negative, and used it to get better. In cross country, she ran her way into the top seven and never looked back. She was always a top five runner for the team and was that kid that would run their guts out to support her teammates in front of her.”

After seeing a little varsity time her freshman year in basketball, Holtzen eventually worked her way up the ranks to where she found herself as a starting guard and team captain her senior year.

“To accomplish something like this requires such significant commitment and determination,” girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry said. “She’s such an impressive student-athlete because of the leader she was for multiple teams at Louisburg High, her high level of success in the different programs and her outstanding academic performance.”



Earning 12 varsity letters might be impressive enough to some, but it certainly wasn’t enough for Holtzen as she also had a lot of success in the classroom.

Holtzen was No. 1 in her class with a 4.0 GPA and was a fixture on the Wildcat debate team. She went on to finish third in the state in the 2-speaker competition for two years and was also a member of the 4-speaker team to take third at state last season.

To find time to participate in three sports, debate and find a way to get her school work done, Holtzen had to become a master planner.

“The biggest you thing you have to do, no matter what activity you are doing, is you have to prioritize your time,” she said. “You have to choose what is the most important to you and what is going to help you most on the long run.

“For me, it was having good grades. Learning in school is going to transfer in my job later in life and the odds of me actually pole vaulting professionally are really, really slim, so you have prioritize getting your homework done and staying on task in class. A lot what I tried to do was to get as much stuff as I could in class and then after school I could I just go to my sport and finish up the homework later.”

In a time where specialization in sports has become the norm, the multi-sport athletes are becoming harder and harder to come by.

At a smaller school like Louisburg, many believe it is important to have athletes out for multiple sports if it wants to compete at a high level and Holtzen enjoyed her time with the different activities. In fact, she believes it helped her in her sport of choice – track.

“On the athletic side, playing multiple sports keeps you from getting injured because you are working different muscles constantly and not overworking the same ones,” she said. “Outside of that, I like doing different activities because it is fun and I get bored when I have to do the same thing over and over again. Being active helps keep it more fun and exciting. Each sport taught me something different.

“Cross country teaches you to push through how hard it is because it is a big mental game and the most successful runners may not be the fastest, but they are most mentally strong. In basketball, I think it teaches you a lot of hard work and commitment and you have to work with other people and not just yourself. With doing pole vault, it is just fun for me because you have to learn a lot of different things and it teaches you patience.”



However, the drawback of being involved in so many things is that sometimes they will overlap, which has happened the last few winters with basketball and debate. Holtzen has had to miss games to attend state debate competitions.

“Basketball season is when it got the hardest for me because it was the same time as debate,” Holtzen said. “Both of those are team activities and I don’t get to set my own schedule. It was hard for me to balance the two and I definitely thought about quitting one or the other a few times, but I didn’t because I enjoy them way too much.

“It is really hard when I have to tell my coach I am not going to be able to be at the game, because it is going to be hard for the team. Everyone on the team has a role, and whenever I am not there to fill my role, it is hard for them and hard for me. I don’t want to miss any games because it is so much fun and you make memories from those.”

Despite all the hustle and bustle of being a 3-sport athlete and achieving academic success, Holtzen would do it all over again if she could.

“It will mean more to me later,” she said of the 12 letters. “My parents have always told me to do three sports and to be involved in as many things as you can. For me, I was going to do it no matter what. I know not everyone thinks that way or has the opportunity. When I look back at high school knowing that I got everything out of it that I could by being involved in three sports and other activities, I will definitely appreciate it more later on.

“It is awesome to see other people doing multiple sports because it is extremely fun and you get to meet and be involved with different people. You get to have a lot of memories with these girls and I think that is one of the best parts of high school.”

Holtzen earns Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year



Isabelle Holtzen had a senior year to remember when it came to the athletic stage at Louisburg High School.

For starters, Holtzen was a member of the first cross country team in Louisburg history to qualify for the Class 4A state meet. She was also a starting guard and team captain for the Lady Cat girls basketball team.

Holtzen topped it all off this past spring when she medaled sixth in the pole vault at Class 4A state track championships in May.

Those were just one of the many reasons why she was chosen as the 2018 Louisburg Sports Zone Female Athlete of the Year.

The award, which is in its first year, is to recognize an outstanding Louisburg High School student athlete. Louisburg Sports Zone asked the head coaches at LHS to submit nominations and those nominations were then organized and submitted back to the coaches for a vote.

The coaches then submitted their top three choices and the number of votes were added up, which decided the winner.

Holtzen finished her high school career on a high note as she racked up 12 varsity letters during her time as a Wildcat and did all that while earning a 4.0 GPA, which was the top in her class.



Pictured (from left) is Louisburg track coach Andy Wright, cross country and track coach John Reece, Isabelle Holtzen and Lady Cat basketball coach Shawn Lowry.

“Her hard work attitude once again helped her to succeed in all events and rewarded her with a school record in the pole vault and state medals,” Louisburg cross country and track coach John Reece said. “It would be cliche to say she is a hard worker as all of her teammates are hard workers and they really compete to do their best in any sport in Louisburg, but she has been a pleasure to coach.”

She made her biggest impact in track and field as she had a record-breaking year in the pole vault this past season for the Lady Cats. She broke her own school record in the event with a vault of 11 feet, 6 inches early in the year and went on to earn her second state medal at the Class 4A state track meet with a clearance of 11-0 and took sixth overall.

Holtzen was also a league and regional runner-up in the pole vault, while also running on legs of the 4×100 and 4×400-meter

relay teams.

She also spent a lot of time on the Louisburg cross country and basketball teams, where she was a key part in both of their successes.

“From Isabelle’s first day of basketball at LHS she had a great work ethic, competed hard every day and never gave less,” Louisburg girls basketball coach Shawn Lowry said. “She embodies those things that are at the core of our program and leaves it so much better because of her involvement.”

Holtzen, who graduated in May, will continue her pole vault career at the University of Northern Iowa.