Wildcat boys win team title, girls medal four at Prairie View



The Louisburg boys cross country team won first place on Thursday at Prairie View. Members of the team (from left) are Spencer Mattison, Ben Proctor, Truman Ellison, Levi Cotter, Noah Cotter and Jerynce Brings Plenty.

LA CYGNE – Winning is always fun and the Louisburg cross country team had a lot of it Thursday at the Ramsey Invitational.

The Louisburg boys won the team title, while Jerynce Brings Plenty and Noah Cotter finished 1-2, respectively, to lead what was a very successful day for the Wildcats at Prairie View High School.

On the girls side, all four runners left with medals as the Wildcats continue to put together what is a successful season to date.

“Everyone had a good day,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “Even though it was a smaller meet, the runners were

competitive and ran well.”

It all started with Brings Plenty as the Louisburg junior crossed the finish line first to win the varsity boys race. Brings Plenty won with a time of 17 minutes and 38 seconds.

Senior Noah Cotter was right behind him as he finished second in 17:58 as the Wildcats earned the 1-2 finish.

Louisburg also had another pair of top 10 medalists. Freshman Levi Cotter was fourth at 19:17, while freshman Truman Ellison was 10th in 19:43.

“It was great to see Jerynce win the race and for Noah to be there in second place at the end of the race was fantastic,” Reece said. “Levi ran a good race as well and moved up throughout the race to be fourth.”

Also on the boys side, junior Ben Proctor earned a medal and was 16th in 20:45. Freshman Spencer Mattison was 23rd in 21:54. The Wildcats won the team title with 22 points and Anderson County as second with 33.



Louisburg's (from left) Lola Edwards, Maddy Rhamy, Erin Apple and Lila Edwards all medaled Thursday at Prairie View.

As for the girls, senior Lola Edwards recorded her best finish of the season as she took fourth in 23:35. Senior Maddy Rhamy also recorded a top-10 finish in 24:16.

Fellow senior Erin Apple medaled 13th in 26:16 and sophomore Lila Edwards garnered her first varsity medal of the year in 19th in 30:18.

"On the girls side, we are still waiting to field a full team in the varsity race because of some injuries," Reece said. "The four that ran the race, Lola, Maddy, Erin, and Lila did a great job. We hope to field at least five varsity runners this week at Perry-Lecompton."

Louisburg will compete at the Perry-Lecompton Invitational at 5 p.m. this Thursday. The races will be held at Hummer Park in Topeka.

Brings Plenty finishes second at Wellsville, Wildcats medal four



Jerynce Brings Plenty ran a personal best time of 16:50 to finish second on Thursday at the Wellsville Invitational. Louisburg earned four medals overall.

WELLSVILLE – It was another meet and another handful of medals for the Louisburg cross country team.

Louisburg brought home four medals Thursday from the Wellsville Invitational as the Wildcats continued to see improvement in what was their third meet of the season.

Coming off a difficult race just five days prior at Wamego, Louisburg coach John Reece liked what he saw out of his runners.

“They did an awesome job at Wellsville,” Reece said. “After competing at Wamego and to race again on Thursday is tough. We

work on different things within the race so it seems more like a workout/race than a true race.”

Jerynce Brings Plenty continues to improve on his strong junior campaign as he found himself toward the top of the pack once again.

Brings Plenty ran a personal best time of 16 minutes and 50 seconds and finished second overall to Central Heights’ Cody Hammond, who ran a 16:37. Brings Plenty also led the boys team to a fourth place team finish with 93 points.



Louisburg senior Lola Edwards works her way through a pack of runners Thursday at Wellsville. Edwards medaled 21st overall.

Senior Noah Cotter also found himself at the front of the pack as he medaled seventh overall in 17:31. Both Wildcat runners have medaled in all three meets of their meets to begin the season.

“Jerynce had a very controlled first mile which allowed him to press the pace more later in the race, which is one of the strategies we’ve been working on,” Reece said. “Noah ran similarly and had a competitive race as well. They are really working well together and their races are showing their hard work.”

Seniors Maddy Rhamy and Lola Edwards led the four-member girls team as they each left Wellsville with a medal.

Rhamy battled her way through the pack to finish eighth overall in 22:23, while Edwards earned her first medal of the season as she took 21st in 23:42.



Senior Erin Apple sprints toward the finish line Thursday at Wellsville.

“Lola went for it from the start and was rewarded for her effort,” Reece said. “Since she did not run at Wamego, she had

free reign to race from the gun and she did. Maddy worked on a controlled start like the boys and passed a ton of runners as she pressed the pass through the second and third miles. Best I could tell she went from about 30th to 8th during the race."

Senior Erin Apple just missed out on the top 30 as she took 31st in 24:18, while Lila Edwards rounded out the girls' team in 57th in 28:14.

On the boys side, freshmen Levi Cotter (20:15) and Truman Ellison (20:16) finished toward the middle of the pack as they finished 32nd and 33rd, respectively.



Freshman Truman Ellison and the Wildcat boys finished fourth as a team Thursday at Wellsville.

Ben Proctor took 48th overall in 21:24 and Spencer Mattison was 61st in 22:12.

Louisburg will be back in action this Thursday as the Wildcats travel to the Prairie View Invitational. Races begin at 3:30 p.m.

Week 3 Athlete of the Week: Maddy Rhamy



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week three of the fall sports season, sponsored by Dr. Laura's Orthodontics.

MADDY RHAMY, SENIOR, CROSS COUNTRY

Louisburg senior Maddy Rhamy is off to a good start in her final cross country season as a Wildcat and that continued last Thursday when she competed in the Wellsville Invitational. Rhamy was one of four Wildcats to earn a medal on the day as she finished eighth overall to lead the girls team in 22 minutes and 23 seconds.

It was third consecutive medal to start the season for Rhamy as she also brought home hardware from Anderson County and Wamego. Rhamy is a returning two-time state medalist for Louisburg.

“It was another strong performance from Maddy,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “She is truly leading the team at this point in the season.”

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

Previous winners:

Week 1: Declan Battle

Week 2: Megan Quinn



Wildcats bring home medals from Wamego Invitational



Louisburg senior Noah Cotter distances himself from the pack during a meet earlier this season. Cotter medaled 19th overall and moved to No. 7 on the school's all-time leaderboard.

WAMEGO – The Louisburg cross country team went up against some of the best Class 4A – and beyond – had to offer Saturday at the Wamego Invitational.

The Wildcats earned three medals, and for the second straight week, Jerynce Brings Plenty, Noah Cotter and Maddy Rhamy each brought home hardware to show for it.

Louisburg competed on one of the tougher courses in the state at the Wamego Country Club, which is the site of the Class 4A state meet later this season.

"I wouldn't say they enjoy running one of the toughest courses in the state, as much as they embrace the experience in preparation for what we hope is a return trip to the state meet," Louisburg coach John Reece said.

The three Wildcat medalists each had strong performances and

it started with Brings Plenty. The Louisburg junior finished 15th overall in 17 minutes, which moved him up to No. 5 on the school's all-time leaderboard.

As for Cotter, the Louisburg senior was right behind him in 20th in 17:17 to lead the Wildcat boys team. That mark was good for the seventh fastest time on the Wildcat leaderboard.

"Jerynce and Noah are working well together this season," Reece said. "Because of this, their performance at Wamego was impressive but not unexpected. Having two low sticks, fast runners so close to each other makes for great inner squad competition and it strengthens the team as well. Finishing 15th and 20th overall was awesome."

On the girls side, Rhamy was just one of two Wildcat runners to compete, along with senior Erin Apple. Rhamy medaled 38th overall in 21:51, while Apple ran a 25:34 for 99th.

"Maddy is a competitor," Reece said. "She is really stepping it up this year and posted one of her strongest times for Wamego, which will set her up for a strong run at returning there in October, hopefully with her team in tow."

The rest of the Wildcat team also posted good times.

Freshman Levi Cotter was third on the boys team in 66th overall in 19:02 and another freshman, Truman Ellison, was 73rd in in 19:14. Junior Ben Proctor (21:22) and freshman Spencer Mattison (21:32) took 113rd and 114th, respectively.

"We took some freshman runners to the meet as well and they really showed some promise," Reece said. "Levi Cotter, Truman Ellison, and Spencer Mattison took on Wamego and showed they have what it is going to take when given the opportunity to race there again."

Louisburg is back in action Thursday when it travels to the Wamego Invitational. Races are set to begin at 4 p.m.

Wildcats medal three in opening meet at Garnett



Louisburg junior Jerynce Brings Plenty gets out to a good start Thursday during the Jerry Howarter Invitational at Garnett Country Club. Brings Plenty finished fourth overall.

GARNETT – The Louisburg cross country team brought home some hardware in its first competition of the season.

Louisburg earned three medals at the Jerry Howarter Invitational last Thursday at Garnett Country Club and did so by not having full squads on both the boys and girls side.

The Wildcats, who had some runners out with injuries, still made some noise as Jerynce Brings Plenty and Noah Cotter each had top 10 finishes to lead the boys. Senior Maddy Rhamy finished in the top 20 to pace the girls side.

“Everyone ran well at Anderson County,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “The temps were not terrible, and there were some first race jitters, but it was a good meet.”

Brings Plenty had a strong showing in his season opener as the Louisburg junior finished fourth out of 73 runners in 17 minutes and 35 seconds.

Cotter was right behind him. The Louisburg senior finished sixth overall in 17:52 to give the Wildcats a strong start to their season.

“Jerynce and Noah ran great races,” Reece said. “Jerynce could do some special things this season and Noah is going to be right there with him. They will be a huge factor when it comes to postseason and team scoring.”



Louisburg senior Maddy Rhamy finished 19th and earned a medal to lead the Wildcat girls.

On the girls side, Rhamy led an injury-riddled girls team that featured just three runners. Still, the Louisburg senior competed against a very strong field as she took 19th in 23:31.

“Maddy ran a solid race,” Reece said. “Earning a medal is always a great way to start the season. I look for her to really step up this year and work hard for the team.”

Senior Lola Edwards was second on the team in 35th overall in 25:49 and senior Erin Apple was 46th in 27:20.

Freshman Truman Ellison was third on the boys team in 50th in 21:27 and junior Ben Proctor was 56th in 22:00.

The schedule gets a little tougher for Louisburg this Saturday as the Wildcats travel to the Wamego Invitational – a meet that brings some of the top teams across the state. It is also the home of the 4A state meet. Races begin at 9 a.m. at the Wamego Country Club.

Louisburg girls cross country primed for another trip to state



Louisburg senior Emma Vohs will try for her third consecutive state medal this season as she is one of seven seniors on this year’s girls cross country team.

For the last six years, the Louisburg girls cross country team has ended its season as the Class 4A state meet in Wamego.

The Wildcats are primed to make it a seventh straight trip.

Louisburg returns most of its state team from a season ago, including four seniors in Emma Vohs, Lola Edwards, Maddy Rhamy and Erin Apple.

Add in fellow seniors Anna Poe, Maddie O’Keefe and Elizabeth George and the Wildcats feature an experienced roster.

“We do have an abundance of experience with the girls team,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “We think the expectation of qualifying for state is always there. Because of our success in the past, the runners put pressure on themselves to continue to perform well come regionals and state.”

Vohs is one runner who has found a lot of success for the Wildcats. Vohs is a two-time state medalist, including a 10th place finish in 2022.

Rhamy and Edwards are also returning state medalists. Both runners medaled in 2020 and Rhamy medaled again in 2021, so the team has earned five state medals between them.



Louisburg senior Maddy Rhamy will try for her third state medal in four years as she helps lead the Wildcat girls team.

Four of those runners – Vohs, Rhamy, Edwards and Apple – were also a part of the Wildcats' third place state team in 2020.

On the boys side, the Wildcats feature just one senior in Noah Cotter, who missed the state meet by one spot last season. Cotter will look to lead a young boys team along with junior Jerynce Brings Plenty.

Brings Plenty is coming off a pair of state medals last season in track, but missed most of his sophomore year in cross country due to an injury.

"The boys team is very young but very hard workers," Reece said. "Jerynce and Noah have set a positive tone to start the season with their work ethic and leadership. Jerynce does look to build off of his track season and is looking to move up the

leaderboard.”



Louisburg’s Noah Cotter is the lone Wildcat senior this year on the boys team and will try and earn a spot at the state meet this season.

As far as who will compete on the boys and girls varsity roster for the opening meet, Reece said there will be a lot of competition for those spots between now and the end of the year.

Reece is also believes there could be some freshmen that will impact the team as well.

“As far as varsity and junior varsity, it is always a work in progress/revolving door,” Reece said. “We will move runners up and down as needed, so that they can find success which will create a positive mindset. That will come in handy as we approach postseason. We also have a great freshman class and

it will be exciting to watch them progress this year.”

Louisburg opens it season Thursday when it travels to Garnett for the Jerry Howarter Invitational. Races are set to begin at 3:30 p.m. with the middle school level.

The Wildcats will host their lone home competition on Oct. 5 at Lewis-Young Park.

Wildcat fall teams underway with successful first week of practice



Louisburg senior Wyatt Holland takes a handoff from backup quarterback Alex Saad during a practice last week.

Before the record setting heat and humidity that is currently smothering Louisburg and the surrounding areas came in, the Wildcat fall sports teams got in a solid first five days of practice last week.

The first day of practice opened the fall season on Aug. 15 as the Wildcat football, boys soccer, cross country and volleyball programs officially kicked off the season.

Participation numbers were up for most of the sports, while football, soccer and cross country had a good week’s worth of

practice outdoors. With heat and humidity at record levels this week, all outdoor sports will be forced to hold practices early in the morning.

It was a successful season for all four teams last year and it started with the Wildcat football program as they ran through the Frontier League with an undefeated record and earned its first league title since 2018.

The Wildcats currently have 76 players out for football under second-year coach Drew Harding, which about 10 more than a year ago.

“First couple days of practice have been going well,” Harding said. “There is a lot of energy on the field during practice, which is great to have. You can tell they are happy to be back playing football again.”

Harding kept his players busy over the summer to help prep them for the season. The Wildcats took part in several scrimmages, 7-on-7 and skill sessions, to go along with their normal team camp and weights.

“This allowed everyone to get on the same page and be ready to roll once we started practice in the fall,” Harding said. “The goal is that everything over the summer carries over and we can just continue to get better at what we do once the season starts.

“We want to continue to come together as a team and continue to build camaraderie. We also want to make sure we have the base schemes in all three phases installed and understood before we start putting in opponent specific plans. We want to see athletes compete and separate themselves from one another to show who is ready to play on Friday nights.”



Louisburg sophomore Caileigh Kilgore goes through a hitting drill last week during tryouts.

The Louisburg volleyball program is coming off another state tournament run that saw the Wildcats finish fourth at the Class 4A tourney. That success brought a lot of interest as 39 players tried out, and 32 are currently rostered between the three teams.

“The first three days of the season with tryouts were pretty great,” Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. “Everyone came with positive attitudes and high energy to push through the challenges of tryouts. After the team was finalized, we got to work right away on Thursday. The energy in the gym is great, and everyone is aware of the high expectations we have for ourselves heading into the season. Both the girls and the coaches are excited to be back in the gym getting better every day.”

Wildcat volleyball also had a busy summer schedule the held a

team camp to start, before competing in a summer league and held several open gyms in June and July.

Varsity level players traveled to the University of Nebraska team camp and also competed a tournament in Andale.

“While summer is busy with all kinds of activities, vacations and summer jobs, we appreciate the time and effort all of the girls put in to dedicate themselves to the team and the sport of volleyball,” Willer said. “It also gives us coaches more time to get to know them heading into the season and to develop relationships earlier on so we can get right into volleyball here in August.

“During these first few weeks we hope to foster a culture of competition in our gym where the girls are all challenging each other every single day. We are all on the same page with where we want to be at the end of the season, so during these first few weeks we are focused on building a strong foundation that will help us get there with an emphasis on team bonding/connections, fundamentals, and conditioning.”



Louisburg senior Emma Vohs is a returning state medalist for the Louisburg cross country team.

The Louisburg cross country team also had a big season last year, especially on the girls side. The Wildcat girls qualified for state and Emma Vohs left Wamego with a state medal.

As far as numbers go, the cross country group is a little down this year with 22, but they still have high aspirations again.

“The runners are excited for the season,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “The girls team is planning for big things again this year and the ‘young’ boys team is looking great.”

Many of those runners have taken to the streets over the summer to get their work in as they prepare for another difficult slate of meets in 2023.

“We had a consistent group of both LHS and LMS runners all summer,” Reece said. “Because of the good turnout, we can get

going on the harder workouts earlier in the season.

“The beginning of the season always creates a challenge with runners being at different points of their base building. We look to build base for all and start working on racing skills and workouts as the weeks progress.”



Louisburg junior Emmett White goes through a drill last week at practice.

The Louisburg soccer team will have some rebuilding to do this season as the Wildcats had to say goodbye to 15 seniors from a year ago.

There will certainly be several players to help fill the void as 41 athletes came out for soccer this fall.

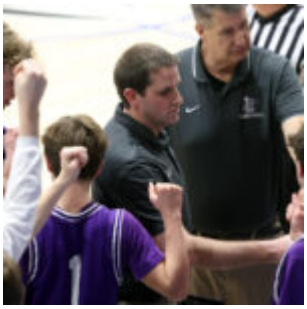
“There’s been a huge precedent set with the program, and it’s definitely something that’s been instilled in the players for quite some time,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Since I’ve joined the program, the junior and senior leaders have

been outstanding at organizing summer workouts and activities for the team. It’s been great seeing that sort of self-motivation and leadership from them. We’ve had enough time together as a program over the summer that the first days of tryouts have been smooth as can be. Very little instruction needed, and the guys have been able to jump right in with what we’re asking from them.”

The Wildcats opened their summer hosting a youth camp and then went right in to summer workouts. Louisburg also held its annual team camp to go along with weights sessions.

“With only two returning starters from last year, we’re going to have some growing pains for sure,” Bovaird said. “The first couple of weeks will need to be spent getting in match shape and gelling as a team with so many players being in new positions or at a new level. We open our season with Leavenworth, who was our final regular season game last year. Back then, both varsity and JV had awesome games, but those were totally different teams. We’ll see how well we’ve reloaded for this year, but I’m feeling pretty good.”

Pfannenstiel named new LHS AD; resigns boys basketball post



Louisburg boys basketball coach Ty Pfannenstiel will take over the school's activities director role next school year. He also resigned his basketball position after coaching the Wildcats for the last six years.

Beginning next school year, Louisburg High School activities will have a little different look to it – especially at the top.

Ty Pfannenstiel will serve as the school's new activities director and will take over for current AD, Michael Pickman, who will focus on his assistant principal duties and curriculum.

Pfannenstiel, who has been the boys basketball coach for the last six years, resigned his post to take on the activities director position. He also stepped down as an assistant football coach.

Currently the weight room instructor, Pfannenstiel will spend half his day teaching and the other half in the AD role.

All of the moves were approved during Monday's meeting of the USD 416 Board of Education.

"This is very exciting for me," Pfannenstiel said. "It's definitely going to be a change. I have been a teacher and a coach for 18 years. I still get to be a teacher half-time, and now I get to step into a new role as an administrator. It is going to be all sports and activities and I am looking forward to the new direction."

As for Pickman, he gets the opportunity to focus more on the academic side as a full-time assistant principal. He was hired as an assistant principal/ activities director in April of 2020.

"I am very excited to commit more fully to the assistant principal role as education and curriculum have always been my

true passion," Pickman said. "Being able to support the teachers, students, and administrative staff by providing data, feedback, and assessing teaching and learning goals and initiatives in the building and district aligns with that passion and the opportunity arose to allow for that. I hope to enable and promote continued growth in the various curriculums and initiatives and structures that make Louisburg a fantastic district in a supportive community.

"Ty has experience and is passionate about athletics and activities. As it is where his passion is, I have every confidence he will do a fantastic job in his new role and look forward to witnessing where he takes our programs moving forward."

Pickman took over LHS activities at a difficult time as the school was coming back from COVID-19 and the all challenges it presented. As tough as that situation was, he appreciated the relationships he built.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my role as activities director and was presented a fantastic growth opportunity and am grateful for being given it," Pickman said. "I had a goal of being present for athletes and coaches and for the patrons, so I hope people saw that presence. I was blessed to have great leadership in place in our coaches and sponsors, and tried to support them best by advocating for their needs and supporting them to do their job of being great role models and passing on their passion and knowledge to students.

"Ultimately, I am most proud of our student athletes and activity participants and being part of their journey. I believe that sports are an extension of the classroom and I wanted to help ensure that character and sportsmanship were just as important and success, and I am overjoyed to have a wealth of memories where our fans, students, participants, and coaches and sponsors proved that to be true of LHS."

While taking on the challenge of being a new administrator is one he is looking forward to, leaving his coaching roots behind was a difficult decision for Pfannenstiel.

In 2021, Pfannenstiel led the Wildcat boys basketball team to the Class 4A state championship game and finished as the state runner-up.

“That was definitely the biggest thing that was holding me back,” Pfannenstiel said. “I love basketball and the kids that I have worked with. There is a group coming up that I really enjoy coaching, and leaving that behind was one of the biggest challenges for me. Whoever takes over the program, I think it will be good transition for them because they will have a great group of kids to work with.

“Originally, I was going to be allowed to coach a sport and they didn’t want to take coaching away from me. The more I thought about it, if I want to do a good job at this, I need to focus on being the AD and that will be something that will benefit me and all the other activities.”

Pfannenstiel believes the move is a good one for the school in general as it will allow Pickman and principal Amy VanRheen to focus more on the academic side of things.

“This is something that is definitely needed,” Pfannenstiel said. “Our administrators are so busy with all the stuff they do during the school day, but they are also going to all the activities as well. Hopefully this will be a big help for Mrs. VanRheen and Mr. Pickman.”

Although he won’t official start his new position till next school year, Pfannenstiel is already starting to transition into his new role – one that is looking forward to.

“My job in the weight room and coaching has all been about sports,” he said. “That is what entices me about this job is that I am still going to be all about sports and activities. I

just want to be a support for our coaches and our athletes and be advocate for our students.”

Top 10 Louisburg Sports Stories of 2022

It was a successful, and eventful, 2022 for Louisburg High School athletics and for those who are connected to the Wildcat program.

This past year created a lot of school history for LHS and a few programs brought back state hardware.

Below are the top stories from 2022, along with a brief explanation of each. Included in the writeup is the link to the actual story from the event.

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

This year was a blast to cover and I am looking forward to seeing what 2023 will bring. Thank you to everyone for their support and can’t wait for it all to begin again.



10. Louisburg golf qualifies for state

FORT SCOTT – As the scores were rolling in, the Louisburg golf team was a little worried.

The Wildcats were in jeopardy of not qualifying for state after a few of the golfers didn’t have the scores they were hoping for in the Class 4A regional tournament in Fort Scott.

Chanute and Independence had already assured themselves of a spot, but the third place team was up in the air as the top three teams automatically qualify for state.

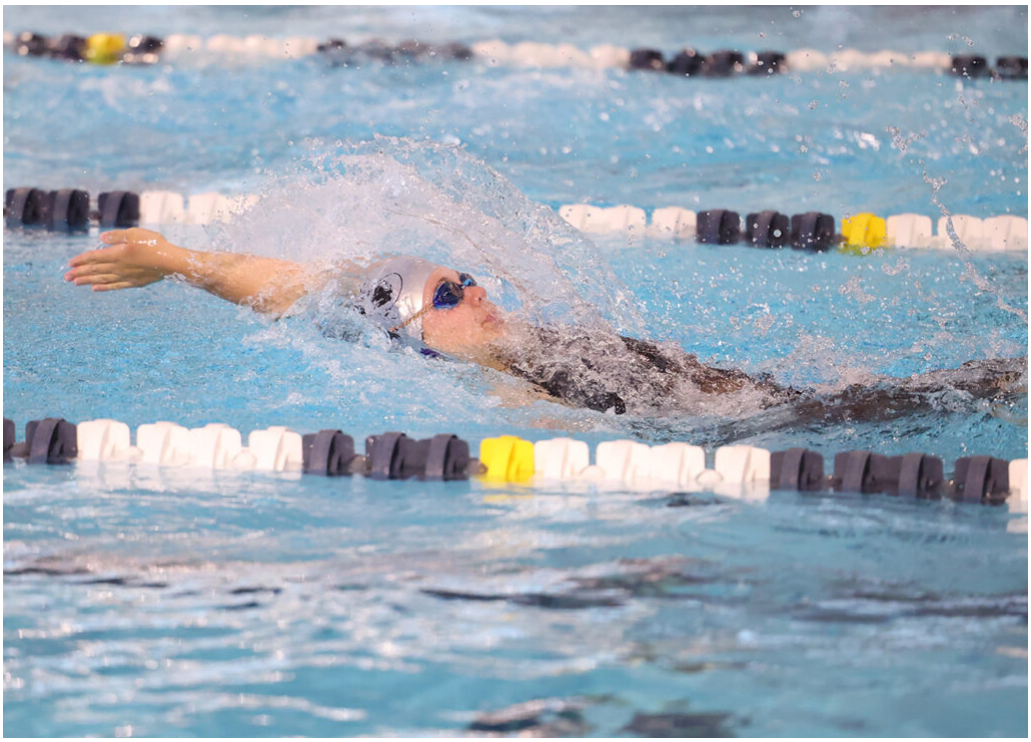
As it turned out, the Wildcats had nothing to worry about as they edged Paola by four strokes to finish in third with a 357 to secure their third consecutive spot in the 4A state tournament.

Seniors A.J. Arriola, Sam Wheeler, Ian Kirkpatrick, Johnny Thompson, along with juniors Jackson Olson and Nick Lancaster, advanced to the state tournament.

Arriola carded a 78 and finished as a regional runner-up, as he was just two strokes behind regional champion Drayton Cleaver of Chanute.

As for Olson, the Louisburg junior set a personal record by six strokes to shoot an 81 and took fourth overall. Those personal bests were enough to get the Wildcats into that third place spot.

At state, Arriola and Wheeler finished as the team's top two golfers. Arriola carded a 97 to take 59th overall, while Wheeler finished with a 98 and came in 66th.



9. Brueggen's earns school's first state swim medal

LENEXA – Even though she is just a freshman, Sabra Brueggen is already putting a stamp on her high school swim career at Louisburg High School.

It all came to a rousing end on May 21 as Brueggen earned her first state medal at the Class 5-1A Kansas State Swim and

Diving Championships at the Shawnee Mission School District Aquatic Center.

Brueggen became the first swimmer in school history to earn a state medal as she finished fifth in the 100-yard backstroke in 1:00.58.

On the day before in the preliminaries, Brueggen also took fifth in a season-best time of 1:00.15.

“Medaling as freshman means the world to me, and it proves to me that all of my hard work for all of these years, has paid off,” Brueggen said. “I feel like I performed my absolute best at state, and I was very happy with the results. It gives me confidence that I will have a bright future representing OzPaLou at the state swim meets.”

She nearly had a second medal in the 50 freestyle. Brueggen put together a season-best time of 25.26 seconds, but finished ninth overall. It was the same finish she had the in the preliminaries.

The top eight in each event earn a state medal as she was just .06 away from earning another spot on the medal stand.



8. Harding takes over as Wildcat football coach

The Louisburg football program had a different leader on the sidelines this past season.

The USD 416 Board of Education approved the hire of LHS assistant coach Drew Harding to be the team's new head coach in January after the district decided not to renew the contact of former coach Robert Ebenstein.

Harding spent the last five seasons as a Wildcat assistant coach, including time as a defensive coordinator. He is a 2010 Louisburg graduate and was a big part of the Wildcat program during his time as a student-athlete at Louisburg High School.

However, Harding didn't see himself be a head coach of any sport coming out of college.

"It means a lot," Harding said. "When I got out of school, I didn't get into education right away and started somewhere else. I decided to get into education because of the impact my former coaches at Louisburg had on me. To come full circle and to be in the position that I am in now, is pretty surreal. I am really excited for the opportunity and hopefully I can have the same type of impact on student athletes as they come through the program."

Ebenstein has the been the head coach the last five seasons and helped the Wildcats to a 30-18 record during that time, including a Frontier League and regional title in 2018. He had a winning record three of those five seasons.

He was also named the KFCA Coach of the Year during that season and was selected to be an assistant coach for the Kansas Shrine Bowl. He was an assistant coach for the Wildcat program for five years before earning the head coaching job.



7. Conley resigns a Louisburg head boys and girls soccer coach

Louisburg High School head boys and girls soccer coach Kyle Conley stepped down from his position after seven years.

He was recently hired to lead the boys and girls soccer programs at Blue Valley West, where he will serve as the head coach of both teams.

Conley, who also taught social studies at LHS, informed the players and parents of his decision on May 4. The Blue Valley Board of Education approved his hire on May 9.

“Making the decision to leave Louisburg was extremely difficult,” Conley said. “The players and parents, both past and present, made this decision tough. No parents or players caused this decision. I am very thankful to Mr. (Dave) Tappan and Mr. (Darin) Gagnebin for giving me this opportunity to coach and teach at Louisburg. The amount of support that my

teams, my family and I received from Louisburg soccer parents and the community was incredible.”

Bobby Bovaird was hired as the new boys head coach, while Ben York returned to the program as the new assistant. York was also named the girls head coach after serving 13 years as the boys head coach previous to Conley.

Conley has the been head girls coach at Louisburg since its inception in 2016 and has led that program to four consecutive state final fours.

Twice, the Wildcats made the state championship game and finished runner-up on both occasions. He has guided the program to an 82-34-3 record.

Conley took over the boys program in 2016 and finished with a 77-32-3 record. He led the Wildcats to two state final fours during that span, including a third place finish in 2020.

“I am so proud of the things that our student athletes in the soccer programs have accomplished both on and off the soccer field,” Conley said. “I will always cherish the memories that we have made here with the Louisburg soccer programs.”



6. Girls cross country qualifies for state, Vohs earns state medal

WAMEGO – For the second consecutive season, Emma Vohs left the Class 4A state cross country meet with more than was she arrived with.

Vohs earned her second state medal at Wamego Country Club as she finished 10th overall with a time of 20 minutes and 51 seconds. The Louisburg junior did what she set out to accomplish.

“I was so excited to win another state medal this season and couldn’t be happier that I reached my goal for that race, which was placing top 10,” Vohs said. “The race was a tougher course, as was the competition this year, but I am blessed to run with such talented girls that push me to do better each race.”

Vohs led the Lady Cat team that qualified for state for the sixth consecutive season. As a team, Louisburg finished eighth overall with 208 points.

A week earlier at regionals, the team of Vohs, Maddy Rhamy, Lola Edwards, Nova Ptacek, Bree Gassman, Erin Apple and Madison Huggins finished third to punch their ticket to state

“It never gets old seeing the joy in the team’s eyes when they hear they qualified for state,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “The girls work hard to accomplish this goal each year, and because of their dedication to their sport, they achieve great things even if they might not make it, but they did.

“The program has built itself and I’m just glad to be a part of it. Yes, we put together a training plan to accomplish great things at the end of the season, but the runners do the work to get there. It takes self discipline, motivation and

guts to be there at the end of the season.”



5. Wildcat wrestling medals 3 at state

Louisburg wrestling has had its fair share of state medalists in its long history, but what the Wildcats accomplished in February at the Tony’s Pizza Events Center in Salina was something the program had never seen before.

The Wildcats left the Class 4A state tournament with three state medalists, the most for one year in program history.

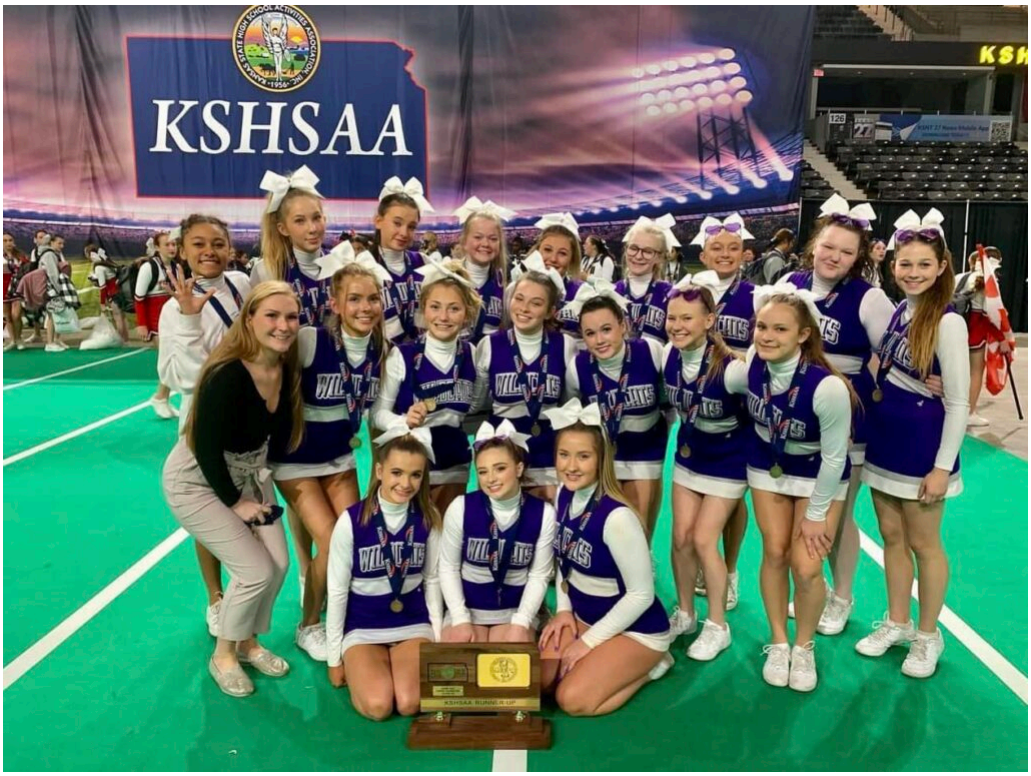
Aiden Barker (195 pounds), Kaven Bartlett (126) and Elijah Eslinger (285) each finished in the top six in their respective weight classes and put together their best performances of the season. It was also the first time each of them earned a state medal.

“This season was the most state placers we’ve had in a single year in program history,” Louisburg coach Bobby Bovaird said. “Prior to 1992, KSHSAA only medaled the top 4 in each weight. In both 1988 and 1989, we had two top-4 placers and one top-6 placer, but this really shows how the program is progressing

and developing. We nearly had four medalists, too.”

Barker, a senior, was a favorite for a medal heading into Salina and finished fifth overall with a 13-1 major decision over Ottawa’s Jared Ferguson in the fifth-place match.

Bartlett and Eslinger also left lasting impressions on the Wildcat program as each medaled sixth overall after both nearly turned their brackets upside down as they advanced to the semifinals on Friday. They both guaranteed themselves a medal on the first day.



4. Louisburg cheer earns state runner-up performance

TOPEKA – It has almost become commonplace to see the Louisburg High School cheer squad in the finals of the Class 4A Gameday Spirit Showcase.

However, that doesn’t mean the cheerleaders are any less excited about it.

For the second straight season, the Wildcats finished as the state runner-up in the Class 4A competition at the Stormont-Vail Events Center. They finished with a score of 79.45 and were one point behind champion Paola.

It is the fourth straight season that the Wildcats have finished in the top three, which included a state championship in 2019.

“I am so unbelievably and incredibly proud of this team,” Louisburg coach Marissa Morrow said. “This positivity and attitude that these girls have shown this year have been the key to our success. I had no doubt that the material and performances we brought on Saturday had the potential to do well, but it was the girls who made it possible to pull it together. They were all such competitors and left it all out on the mat, and I couldn’t ask for more. We also could not have done it without the support of our amazing cheer families.”

Members of the team are Sydney Dudzik, Bella Feikert, Zoe Cutshaw, Caroline Dugger, Elizabeth George, Addison Drake, Brooklyn Harmon, Adison Vargo, Maddy Carpenter-Ross, Sienna Finch, Alayna Stohs, Alaina Dudzik, Maddie O’Keefe, Liz Willming, Kayleigh Ramsey, Taryn Osborn, Anna Brizendine and Jocelyn Burk.



3. LHS football secures Frontier League title

With just over a minute left in regulation, Louisburg was staring at the possibility of their first league loss and was watching an outright Frontier League title slip away.

Spring Hill scored a touchdown and took a four-point lead with 1 minute and 12 seconds left. Things were looking bleak for the Wildcats.

As it turned out, 52 seconds was all the Wildcats needed to pull off one of the season's most memorable moments. Louisburg quarterback Declan Battle found junior Caden Caplinger in the endzone on an 18-yard touchdown pass with 20 seconds remaining to give the Wildcats a 20-17 victory.

The win was the Wildcats' seventh straight on the season and clinched the team's first Frontier League championship since 2018.

“There weren’t a lot of people who thought we could be league champions,” Louisburg coach Drew Harding said. “I don’t think it was anything that people expected out of us, and the Frontier League is really good. For this group to come to work, get better every day and to see success is pretty sweet.”

The win was extra special for 16 Louisburg seniors as they were also able to celebrate that league title on Senior Night.

Jackson Kush, Nathan Apple, Carson Wade, Isaiah Whitley, Riley Van Eaton, J.R. Rooney, Will Hutsell, Brayton Brueggen, Christian Golladay, Nathan Vincent, Jase Hovey, Mack Newell, Hunter Moore, Mason Dobbins, Corbin Hamman and Layne Ryals all got to end their final regular season home game with a win.

“The Frontier League title means so much to me and this team,” Rooney said. “As a team before the season, the seniors wrote down our goals, and league champs was on everyone’s list. To clinch it on senior night was amazing. Going undefeated at home, to win it on our field in front of our town – it was an indescribable feeling.”



2. Wildcat volleyball finishes fourth at state

HUTCHINSON – The state tournament ended the way it started for the Louisburg volleyball team – with a loss to Towanda-Circle.

Still, it was everything that happened in between that made for a lot of lasting memories for the Wildcat players.

Louisburg went 2-1 in pool play at the Hutchinson Sports Arena, which included a revenge win over Tonganoxie in the final match of the day. That gave the Lady Cats a spot in the state semifinals Saturday, where they finished fourth in Class 4A.

The Wildcats suffered a 2-0 loss to both Bishop Miege and Circle, but they still ended their season as one of the state's top teams.

"I am extremely proud of this team," Louisburg coach Leanna Willer said. "Looking at how we started this season, and our ups and downs along the way, it is a huge accomplishment for them to have come together as a team at the end of the season and play our best volleyball yet. It was apparent in the last couple of weeks that they really started playing for each other and capitalizing on the strong team bonds they built throughout the year."

It was all thanks to an upset the previous week. Louisburg defeated the state's No. 1 seed, Baldwin, in the sub-state championship match to earn the state berth.

The Wildcats, the No. 9 seed, knocked off No. 1 seed Baldwin, 25-18 and 25-19, at Baldwin High School in the finals of the Class 4A sub-state tournament. That win puts Louisburg in the state tournament for the first time since 2019.

Members of the team are Emma Prettyman, Adyson Ross, Claire

Brown, Allie Kennedy, Ashlyn Berck, Delaney Nelson, Izzy Moreland, Bronwynn Williams, Caileigh Kilgore, Megan Quinn, Hailey Sword and Madelyn Williams.



1. Wildcat boys take third at state track; Koontz, Caplinger win state titles; Lady Cats medal nine

WICHITA – For the second consecutive season, the Louisburg boys track and field team brought home hardware from the Class 4A state meet.

After winning the state championship in 2021, the Wildcats once again found their way to the podium in Wichita as they finished third overall with 67 points.

Andale won the state championship with 101 points and Chanute was the state runner-up with 71.

Louisburg got points from a lot of different areas as the Wildcats medaled in 10 events and had 12 medalists overall, including all three of their relays.

Louisburg senior Tom Koontz won a pair of state titles in the hurdles, while sophomore Caden Caplinger captured the gold medal in the pole vault.



“I am not going to complain at all,” Koontz said. “I believe we came here with less people than we did last year and everyone did their best. Even though we didn’t get exactly what we wanted, third place is still a great achievement.”

What he couldn’t believe was he had just won his first state title in the 300 hurdles and Koontz did so by breaking a 14-year-old school record. Koontz ran a time of 38.98 seconds to break R.J. Saunders’ record of 39.16 set in 2008 to earn the gold.

It turned out to be his second state title of the day as he also earned the gold medal in the 110-meter high hurdles with a time of 14.61 seconds. Koontz won the state in that event last season as well.

Caplinger cleared a lot of his marks in the pole vault and did so in convincing fashion as he was able to win a state title in just his second year with the program.



Last season at state, Caplinger medaled eighth after he cleared 12-6. A year later, the Louisburg sophomore improved his mark by two feet and is a state champion.

It was an impressive showing from Caplinger as he didn’t miss an attempt until he tried for 15 feet at the end. He entered the competition at 12-6 and had five straight successful clearances.

“At first I was really nervous, but then it just kind of turned into a routine thing,” Caplinger said. “I started going over heights consistently and the rest just kind of fell into place. I cleared 14-6 earlier this week twice in a row, so I knew I could do it. I was still a little nervous though.”

As for the Lady Cats, Delaney Wright left the state meet with three medals. Wright, who has been coming back from a severe injury for most of the season, finished as the state runner-up

in the 400-meter dash, third place in the 200 dash and fifth in the long jump.

A season ago, Wright was the state champion in all three events, but couldn’t get the repeat she was hoping for.



“Going into state I knew I still wasn’t where I want to be due to my injury a couple months ago,” Wright said. “But I wanted to attack it still and give it all I had. I am blessed I was there to compete and earn three medals cause in the beginning I didn’t even know if I was going to compete my senior year.”

In all, the Lady Cats put together a strong state performance as they medaled in nine events and finished with 40 team points and took sixth overall. They were just eight points away from the third place spot, and a plaque.

“Once again the state qualifiers did an amazing job,” Louisburg girls coach John Reece said. “They all performed well and most beyond expectations. To leave the meet finishing in sixth place was outstanding. We left with lots of medals and great memories.”

Vohs earns second state cross country medal



Louisburg junior Emma Vohs works her way up the field Saturday during the Class 4A state cross country meet at Wamego Country Club. Vohs finished 10th overall to earn a state medal.

WAMEGO – For the second consecutive season, Emma Vohs left the Class 4A state cross country meet with more than was she arrived with.

Vohs earned her second state medal Saturday at Wamego Country Club as she finished 10th overall with a time of 20 minutes and 51 seconds. The Louisburg junior did what she set out to accomplish.

“I was so excited to win another state medal this season and couldn’t be happier that I reached my goal for that race, which was placing top 10,” Vohs said. “The race was a tougher course, as was the competition this year, but I am blessed to run with such talented girls that push me to do better each race.”

Vohs led the Lady Cat team that qualified for state for the sixth consecutive season. As a team, Louisburg finished eighth overall with 208 points.

A pair of Frontier League schools finished in the top two of

the team standings. Eudora won the state title with 51 points, Baldwin was second with 84 and Winfield was third at 87.



Members of the Louisburg girls state cross country team are (from left) head coach John Reece, Maddie O'Keefe, Lila Edwards, Nova Ptacek, Bree Gassman, Emma Vohs, Lola Edwards, Maddy Rhamy, Erin Apple, Madison Huggins and assistant coach Shelby Suther.

"The girls ran well at state," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "We had a restart which was not ideal, but we still had a good race. State is a tough field on a tough course which challenges all aspects of a sporting competition.

"Emma ran a great race and moved through the field the whole race. To medal again this year is a testament to her grit and perseverance. Tenth in the state is an amazing accomplishment."

Juniors Maddy Rhamy and Lola Edwards were next to cross the finish line for the Wildcats. Rhamy finished 41st out of more than 100 runners in 22:27, while Edwards took 63rd in 23:08.

Sophomore Madison Huggins was 80th in 24:22 and senior Nova Ptacek finished 85th in 24:34. Junior Erin Apple was 96th in

25:25 and senior Bree Gassman rounded out the Wildcat lineup in 102nd in 26:15.

Saturday marked the end of another successful season for Louisburg girls cross country and many of the runners are ready for another go at it next year.

“We had an interesting season this year,” Reece said. “We really can’t put a finger on any one thing but it has left the girls hungry for next year and to better themselves and the team. The bus ride home was focused on them talking about track and what they can do to get better.

“We are losing some great senior leaders on both sides of the team and they will be missed.”