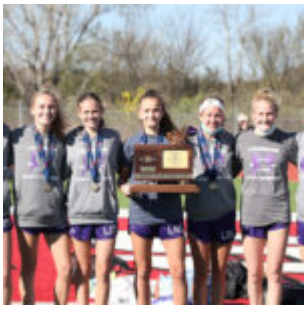
Making HER-STORY: Lady Cats finish third at state



Members of the Louisburg girls cross country team are (from left) Nova Ptacek, Claire Brown, Maddy Rhamy, Reese Johnson, Lola Edwards, Bree Gassman and Erin Apple.

WAMEGO – For 23 years, the Louisburg cross country program has been chasing a top three finish at the Class 4A meet.

The Wildcats have had several teams qualify, especially in the last few seasons, but have always come up short of their goal. Following Saturday's race in Wamego, the Wildcats can finally stop running after it.

The Louisburg girls put together an historic performance at the Class 4A Kansas State Cross Country Championships at Wamego Country Club. The Lady Cats earned a state plaque with a third place finish as they surpassed Buhler by eight points to record the school's first top three state finish.

Junior Reese Johnson, sophomores Claire Brown, Bree Gassman and Nova Ptacek, along with freshmen Lola Edwards, Maddy Rhamy and Erin Apple, will all go down in school history as they became the first Wildcat team to bring home state hardware.

"It means the world to me to be a part of the first team ever to place at state," Rhamy said. "Coming into the state meet, I was just hoping our team would be in the top half, so you could imagine my excitement when our team placed third. I didn't even know we made school history until our coaches told

us.”

Rhamy was one of two freshmen who earned top 10 finishes individually, along with Edwards. Rhamy finished eighth overall in 20 minutes and 58 seconds, while Edwards was right behind her in 10th in 21:02.



Louisburg freshman Maddy Rhamy finishes eighth overall at the Class 4A state meet in Wamego.

Junior Reese Johnson also garnered a state medal as she was 15th in 21:28 to help the Lady Cats to an historic performance.

“It meant so much to me that we got third as a team,” Johnson said. “Honestly it was the best feeling ever, and I’m so proud of everyone, especially our freshman. They really stepped up and got us there. I was very surprised that we got third, and when I heard, I was ecstatic.”

It was a proud moment for many in the Louisburg program, and included in that is John Reece. The longtime Wildcat head coach was all smiles following his team's performance.

"It is 23 years the making," coach Reece said. "You always have the plans and goals to get to state and then you get a group to go to state and do something great. This year was one of those. With the Frontier League as tough as it is, and then getting third there, put it in our heads that maybe we could do this. They all went out and ran their races, and that just shows their grit and determination and who they are."

"They went out and did what they needed to do individually. That is hard to do at a state competition. Your adrenaline gets pumping, sometimes you go out too fast and they didn't do that. They were very composed throughout the race. Maddy, Lola and Reese just kept moving through the field, and I think after the first mile they were like in 20 or 25th place. As the race played out, they were able to move up because they ran their race. It is just incredible."



Freshman Lola Edwards took 10th at the 4A state meet as she was one of three Lady Cats to earn medals.

It was an also an all-Frontier League finish as the top three Class 4A teams were all league members. Baldwin won the state title with 39 points, Eudora was second with 60 and Louisburg was third with 100 points.

They were the teams that battled each other all season and that competition helped the Wildcats throughout the year. It certainly helped the two Louisburg freshmen as they made statements in their inaugural state race.

Rhamy surpassed her teammate Edwards late in the race to take the top spot on the Wildcat team for the first time all season.

“I am very happy about how I ran at the state meet,” Rhamy said. “I was ready to run my heart out, and I was so happy to

place in the top ten. I know I will never forget the moment when I crossed the finish line and saw my place. I wanted to do the best I could for the last meet of the season, and I think I did just that."

Edwards ran a strong race from the beginning as she was in fifth place at one point and was able to secure her first state medal.

"Overall I felt that I gave my all on Saturday's race," Edwards said. "Unfortunately I was gone from training the previous week, but I wasn't going to let that change the way I prepared for the big race. My goal was to finish in the top ten, and I was so happy to reach that goal when I crossed the finish line. It was a great experience and I can't wait to do it again next year."



Junior Reese Johnson makes her way up a hill Saturday at Wamego Country Club.

As for Johnson, the Louisburg junior was coming off an injury herself. She missed three meets late in the season, but was able to come back at regionals.

It was that hard work that propelled her to her second state medal after finishing in the top 10 two years ago as a freshman.

“I think I ran alright for being out for a few weeks,” Johnson said. “It definitely could have been better, but it is what it is and I’m very proud. Getting to where I was this year means

a lot to me after having an off year last year. It meant a lot to get that state medal and it was one of the best days of my life. Nothing can beat that feeling.”

The rest of the Lady Cats also ran strong races as Brown finished 49th overall in 22:57 and Gassman was 57th in 23:25. Apple took 67th in 23:42 and Ptacek was 77th in 24:33.

It was also an historic day for the Louisburg boys as the Wildcats competed in their first ever state race as a team.



The Louisburg boys cross country team gets out to a good start in its first-ever state race as a team.

Although, the Wildcats didn’t earn a spot on the medal stand, they were still able to put together a memorable season.

Senior Carson Houchen led Louisburg in 33rd place with a time of 18:12.

Junior Ryan Rogers was 46th in 18:29 and senior Cade Holtzen

was 56th in 18:46. Juniors Hayden Ross (19:09) and Caden Bradshaw (19:16) took 66th and 72nd, respectively.

Sophomore Leo Martin was 81st in 19:39 and sophomore Trent Allen was 90th in 20:26.

“I went back and looked at the boys times, and they are going to see a huge improvement from the first time that we ran here,” coach Reese said. “Qualifying for state was really the goal. That is not to say that we didn’t come here to run our best, but getting to state was just icing on the cake for those boys and it completed our season.

“The boys did what they did all year long, which is they ran their races. I thought Carson had a fantastic race, and while he may have not run his best time, you don’t usually run your best on a tough course like this one. Everyone supported each other, day in and day out, and that was pretty awesome to see.”

Now both teams will begin training for what they hope could be another historic season in the fall of 2021.

“I am very excited for next season considering we’ll be returning our whole team, and I think we can be even better next year,” Johnson said. “I’m looking forward to another top 3 finish next year and can’t wait to get back on the cross country grind.”

Week 9 Athlete of the Week:

Maddy Rhamy



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week nine of the fall sports season, sponsored by Edward Jones- Craig Holtzen.

MADDY RHAMY, FRESHMAN, CROSS COUNTRY

Louisburg freshman Maddy Rhamy saved one of her best performances for last. Rhamy helped the Lady Cat cross country team to a third-place finish at the Class 4A state meet Saturday in Wamego and made school history as they became the first time to place at state.

In doing so, Rhamy earned a state medal as she led Louisburg with an eighth-place finish with a time of 20 minutes and 58 seconds. She was one of three Lady Cats to medal, along with fellow freshman Lola Edwards and Reese Johnson.

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: Weston Guetterman

Week 2: Lola Edwards

Week 3: Logan Faulkner

Week 4: Rinny McMullen

Week 5: Carson Houchen

Week 6: Cade Gassman

Week 7: Alyse Moore

Week 8: Braden Yows

TWICE AS NICE: Wildcats qualify both cross country teams for state



Members of the Louisburg state qualifying cross country teams are (front row, from left) Bree Gassman, Claire Brown, Nova Ptacek, Reese Johnson, Lola Edwards, Erin Apple, Maddy Rhamy and Alexis French; (back row) assistant coach Shelby Marten, Braden Branine, Trent Allen, Caden Bradshaw, Ryan Rogers, Hayden Ross, Carson Houchen, Cade Holtzen, Leo Martin, head coach John Reece and assistant coach Erin Davis.

BALDWIN CITY – For the last four seasons, the Louisburg cross country team has seen its program grow over that time and history has been made on several occasions and 2020 has been no different.

For the first time in school history, both the boys and girls cross country teams will be heading to the Class 4A state meet together as both teams finished third Saturday at the Class 4A regional meet in Baldwin City. In relation to that, the boys team qualified for the first time ever and head coach John Reece will have a full roster for Saturday's state meet in Wamego.

"Coming into the meet on paper, both teams were sitting in fourth," Reese said. "We just had to come out here and do what we have done all year long. The boys especially ran together and ran hard. I think they all PR'd and I think that just shows the team effort that goes into it. For the first time making it for the boys team is awesome and we have two great seniors leading the way and it is an awesome group of kids.

"As for the girls, there wasn't a senior on the squad, and with that in mind, makes it a lot of fun to see what they can accomplish. They were in the same position, and with Reese (Johnson) coming back from injury to do what she had to do, was great to see. It really was a great day."

For the boys, getting to state has been a goal for several years, especially for seniors Carson Houchen and Cade Holtzen. Along with Ryan Rogers, Caden Bradshaw, Hayden Ross, Leo Martin and Trent Allen, the Wildcats will step on the Class 4A state course for the first time as a unit.

All seven runners earned personal best times at the Baldwin Golf Course, which led to them earning 91 points and the third place finish. It helps fill a void that, to this point, had been empty.

"It meant the world for our team to earn a trip to state," Houchen said. "Our goal all four years I've been in cross country has been to earn a team spot at state. A joke on the boys team the past three years has been that we would always be in the girls' shadow because they pretty consistently go to

state as a team, so it feels really good to be on the same level as them.



Senior Carson Houchen leads a group of runners up a hill during Saturday's regional race in Baldwin City.

"Our goal this whole year has been to put a name on the only blank state board in the gym. We knew it would be close with Baldwin, but they were running on their home course and we knew we had to race our best to keep up with them. As soon as we finished the race, and I saw how everyone had done, there was no doubt in my mind that we'd made it to state."

Bishop Miege won the regional crown with 22 points, Eudora was second with 57 and Louisburg had 91 to take third. The Wildcats beat Baldwin by 11 points to earn that state trip.

The Louisburg girls also performed well in their third place

finish as they took third with 68 points, and were just six points behind second place Eudora as they qualified for state for the fourth straight season. Baldwin won the regional crown with 31 points.

Louisburg got a pair of strong performances from freshmen Lola Edwards and Maddy Rhamy. Edwards took third overall in 19 minutes and 49 seconds, just 10 seconds off Trinity Moore’s school record set a year ago, and has the second fastest time in school history.



Freshman Lola Edwards (left) gains on a Baldwin runner Saturday during the Class 4A regional race.

"When I found out both teams were going to state, I was at a loss for words," Edwards said. "State has been a goal, not just for myself, but the team as well the entire season. To accomplish that goal has been a great achievement. Going to state is a big deal, especially as a freshman, but I am going to treat it like any other race and run to compete. I am

blessed to have this opportunity and to be sharing it with such amazing teammates.”

As for Rhamy, she was fourth in 20:29 and it vaulted her to fourth on the school leaderboard with a new personal best time.

“I am so excited to be able to go to state as a team,” Rhamy said. “I have really bonded with my teammates this year and I can’t wait to run at state with them. I think that it’s amazing that I get the opportunity to compete at state as a freshman.”

However, it might not have been possible without the help of Reese Johnson. The Louisburg junior has been out the last two weeks with an injury and Saturday was her first competition back.

Johnson gutted out the race to take 14th in 21:09 and helped the Lady Cats secure a spot in the state meet.

“She had to come out and run her race and do well and she did that,” coach Reece said. “In no way would I expect a PR from her because she hasn’t run for two weeks, but she did what she had to do. She got tight and her legs got kind of heavy there toward the end, but she is a tough kid and she finished it and that is what we needed out of her to accomplish what we did.”



Freshman Maddy Rhamy sprints to the finish line on Saturday in Baldwin.

Freshman Erin Apple also made school history as she set a new personal record time of 21:50 in 23rd, which is the seventh fastest in school history. Sophomore Claire Brown was right behind her in 24th in 21:52.

Sophomore Bree Gassman was 28th in 22:12 and sophomore Nova

Ptacek finished 46th in 23:47.

Houchen put together the best race of his career to help lead the Louisburg boys as he finished 10th overall in 17:45, which is good for the seventh-fastest time in school history.

“Carson ran a fantastic time,” Reece said. “What these boys have done all year is that they run their race and this was a prime example of that. Carson and some of the other boys were at 15th or 20th place through that first mile, but since they were running their races, they just moved through the field. It was just one at a time. Considering this could have been their last race for some of them, they definitely ran their best of the season.”

Rogers and Holtzen each recorded top 20 finishes for Louisburg. Rogers ran an 18:28 to finish in 16th, while Holtzen ran an 18:45 to take 20th overall.

Ross (18:46) and Bradshaw (18:47) finished close behind as they took 22nd and 23rd, respectively, while Martin was 25th in 18:54. Allen took 40th in 19:47 to round out the Wildcat lineup.



Senior Cade Holtzen rounds a turn to stay ahead of a Tonganoxie runner. Holtzen took 20th overall.

For Holtzen, the opportunity to go to state his senior year was the perfect way to end what was already a successful senior season.

“To make it to state my senior year meant everything in cross country,” Holtzen said. “Carson and I have been talking about making state since freshman year and to have that come to

fruition as a senior is something I will never forget. We knew that we were on the bubble of third and fourth, but once I crossed the finish line and saw Caden and Ross right behind me, I had a feeling that we were going to state."

Now, the Wildcats will prepare for the final race of their 2020 campaign. Louisburg will take part in the Class 4A state meet Saturday at the Wamego Country Club. The boys will run at 9:30 a.m. and the girls will follow at 10:05 a.m.

"I think both teams are going to run well," Reece said. "A lot of the runners have been on the course the last couple of years now, so they are familiar with it. As far as the girls go, Maddy is the only one that hasn't run on it, but she is such a great runner that she will just hop in with her teammates and she will be fine. I think if we can go down there and be top half with both teams, I would be thrilled with how the season ended."

Four Wildcat runners earn All-Frontier League honors



Senior Carson Houchen (right) earned second team all-league honors Thursday during the Frontier League Invitational in Ottawa. His teammates Cade Holtzen (left) and Ryan Rogers earned honorable mention honors. Freshman Lola Edwards led the

girls with a first-team all-league selection.

OTTAWA – The Louisburg cross country team competed on one of the toughest courses on its schedule last Thursday, along with running alongside its most difficult competition to date.

The Wildcats competed in the Frontier League Invitational at the Eisenhower Road Course in Ottawa and went up against many state ranked teams and returning state medalists. When it was all said and done, four Louisburg runners left the meet with all-league honors.

Freshman Lola Edwards finished fifth overall in the girls race as she ran a time of 21 minutes and 7 seconds to earn a spot on the all-league first team.

Three Louisburg boys also garnered all-league honors. Senior Carson Houchen took 12th in 19:12, which cemented him a spot on the second team. Junior Ryan Rogers, who finished 16th in 19:23, and senior Cade Holtzen, who took 20th in 19:47, were named honorable mention.

“Lola had a great race and moved through the field as the race played out,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “She has improved her racing this year for sure. Then having three runners receive league honors for the boys was awesome. They have put in the time and they are being rewarded for it.”

The Louisburg boys took fourth in the team standings with 95 points and Eudora won the league title with 49. Tonganoxie’s Eli Gilmore won the individual league crown in 17:25.

Wildcat junior Caden Bradshaw just missed out on all-league honors as he took 23rd overall in 19:55 and fellow junior Hayden Ross was 25th in 20 minutes flat. Sophomore Trent Allen took 33rd in 20:25 and junior Sawyer Richardson was 39th in 20:37 to round out the top seven Louisburg runners.

The Lady Cats, who were without one of their top runners in Reese Johnson due to an injury, took fifth in the team standings with 143 points. Eudora won the league team title with 50 points, just five points ahead of Baldwin.

Piper's Grace Hanson won the individual girls crown with a time of 20:12.

Louisburg freshman Maddy Rhamy just missed out on all-league honors herself as she took 24th overall in 23:10 and sophomore Claire Brown was 38th in 23:48. Sophomore Bree Gassman took 44th in 24:18 and freshman Erin Apple took 49th in 24:36.

Sophomore Nova Ptacek crossed the finish in 53rd in 25:02 and senior Alexis French rounded out the Lady Cat lineup in 56th in 25:30.

Along with the competition, both Wildcats teams went up against a difficult Eisenhower Road Course that features numerous steep hills on the 3-plus mile terrain.

"I thought both teams ran well at Ottawa," Reece said. "They worked hard on a tough course and some of the first timers said they could have run it differently and faster. Frontier League is a tough league and we basically repeat this meet for regionals minus Spring Hill, Bonner Springs and Piper."

Louisburg will try for a trip to state this Saturday when the Wildcats compete at the Class 4A regional meet at the Baldwin Golf Course. The top 3 teams, along with the top five individuals who are not among the state qualifying teams, will advance to the Class 4A state meet next week in Wamego.

The girls race is scheduled for 10 a.m. and the boys will follow.

"Regionals is going to be a tough meet," Reece said. "We set a goal to qualify both teams and they are going to do all they

can to accomplish their goals. Reese (Johnson) will be running as her ankle has improved over the past two weeks. It is going to be an exciting finish."

Wildcat boys finish runner-up at home invite; Edwards takes second



Junior Ryan Rogers took ninth overall to help the Louisburg boys to a runner-up finish last Thursday at the Louisburg Invitational. The Wildcat boys medaled four.

In its final tune-up before the postseason begins, the Louisburg cross country team got a chance to run on its home course one final time last Thursday for the Louisburg Invitational.

Although it was a small meet, one that consisted of six teams, it brought a lot of competition from around the area and the Wildcats more than held their own at the Lewis-Young Park course.

The Louisburg boys were two points shy of first as the Wildcats finished runner-up to Fort Scott with 53 points. In the process, Louisburg also medaled four individual runners and continued to show its progression despite missing one of

their main runners in Caden Bradshaw.

“The boys continue their mission to improve weekly and this was another example of the reward received for hard work,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “Four individual medals is outstanding and to finish just behind Fort Scott, a ranked team, and to beat the other league schools for a second place finish as a team is awesome. I want to put them in ghillie suits and quietly roll into the post season and surprise everyone like I know we can.”

Along with Fort Scott, the Wildcats competed against Spring Hill, Ottawa, Paola and Piper and saw some of the best competition in the Frontier League.

Louisburg senior Carson Houchen ran another strong race to lead the Wildcats. Houchen finished sixth in 18 minutes and 23 seconds.

Junior Ryan Rogers was the next Wildcat to medal as he finished ninth in 18:57 and senior teammate Cade Holtzen was 10th in 19:12. Junior Hayden Ross also earned a medal as he took 12th in 19:23.

Sophomore Leo Martin finished one spot out of a medal in 16th in 19:31 and freshman Noah Cotter took 17th in 19:49. Junior Sawyer Richardson was 28th in 21:19.



Sophomore Claire Brown leads a pack of runners up a hill toward the finish line last Thursday at Lewis-Young Park.

Freshman Lola Edwards continues to make her mark on the Louisburg girls squad as Edwards took runner-up and set a new personal-best time of 20:27. That time gives her the third fastest time in school history.

Another freshman, Maddy Rhamy, also made a statement as she ran a time of 21:48 to medal seventh and recorded the sixth fastest time in program history. Sophomore Claire Brown also garnered a medal as she took 15th in 23:26.

“It is always nice to run on your course, even if we goofed up

the first go-round with a new path," Reece said. "I feel that we have one of the toughest late season small meets around. The girls ran well again. Lola improved on her PR and Maddy also set a PR which is great to see. We are hopeful for a return at regionals for Reese (Johnson)."

The Lady Cats ran without one of their top runners, Reese Johnson, and took fourth as a team with 78 points.

Sophomore Bree Gassman was 26th in 24:18, while Nova Ptacek (24:23) and Erin Apple (25:05) came in 28th and 32nd, respectively.

The postseason will begin this Thursday when the Wildcats compete in the Frontier League Invitational at Ottawa's Eisenhower Road Course. The following week the Wildcats will compete at regionals as they try to earn a state berth.

"We are in the toughest league in 4A and competition is incredible," Reece said. "Our regional will be our league plus three schools so we will have to bring our A-game. There will be schools not qualify for state that would be a top half finisher, but we are 'Built Different' and we will be ready to compete."

Edwards runs way to her third consecutive title



Louisburg freshman Lola Edwards leads a group of runners during the Perry-Lecompton Invitational last Thursday at Perry Lake.

PERRY – She may only be a freshman, but Louisburg's Lola Edwards is running like a seasoned veteran.

Edwards, who had won two consecutive meets prior to Thursday's Perry-Lecompton Invitational, put together another strong showing. The Wildcat freshman captured her third straight first place finish as she won with a time of 23 minutes and 18 seconds on the Perry Lake course.

In fact, Edwards wasn't the only Louisburg freshman to record a top five finish. Maddy Rhamy finished toward the top of the pack in fourth overall in 25:10.

"The race was done in three groups, so Lola ran by herself in front in that third group and won the meet," Louisburg coach John Reece said. "She has an internal drive that is unbelievable. She has the ability to get into her rhythm of the race and go. Maddy ran an awesome race and was second to Lola. She was in the flow and was smiling the whole race."

The Lady Cats had another top three team finish as they recorded 80 points to finish third overall. They did so without one of their top runners – Reese Johnson – who was unable to compete.

Tonganoxie won the meet with 45 points and Paola was second with 74.

Sophomore Claire Brown ran strong for the Lady Cats as she

also medaled in 20th with a time of 26:40. Sophomore Bree Gassman (27:11) and freshman Erin Apple (27:17) also earned medals in 27th and 30th, respectively. Sophomore Nova Ptacek rounded out the Louisburg lineup in 26th in 27:55.

On the boys' side, senior Carson Houchen continues to run well for the Wildcats as he finished ninth in 20:45. It was his fourth consecutive meet in which he has medaled.

"Carson is on a mission," Reece said. "He is leading the boys team and not holding back. After our little hiccup at the beginning of the season, he has cranked it up and the whole team is running strong. If I did my job correctly, the whole team will be rolling come regionals."

Senior Cade Holtzen also earned a medal for Louisburg as he finished 24th in 21:36.

Junior Ryan Rogers was 34th in 22:22 and fellow junior Hayden Ross was 40th in 22:30. Freshman Noah Cotter (22:32) and sophomore Leo Martin (23:17) took 43rd and 55th, respectively.

It was the first time any of the other runners had competed at the Perry Invitational, which was a replacement on the schedule. Louisburg was originally scheduled to compete in Pittsburg, but had to be changed due to COVID-19.

Reece said his runners fared well on the new course, but it did have its fair share of challenges.

"Perry was an interesting course," he said. "There were lots of turns and for almost a mile the runners were not in sight as they were running in the woods on a horse trail. The course also measured long by almost a quarter of a mile, so times were not even looked at. Both teams competed well as that is always our goal and it is not always about time."

Louisburg is back in action this Thursday, this time on their home-friendly course at Lewis-Young Park for the Louisburg Invitational. Races are set to begin at 4 p.m.

Week 5 Athlete of the Week: Carson Houchen



Here is the Louisburg Sports Zone Athlete of the Week for week five of the fall sports season, sponsored by Louisburg Family Dental.

CARSON HOUCHEN, SENIOR, CROSS COUNTRY

Louisburg senior Carson Houchen has guided the Wildcat boys cross country team for most of the season and that continued Thursday at the Perry-Lecompton Invitational. Houchen led the Wildcats with a ninth place finish in 20 minutes and 45 seconds to earn a medal. This was his fourth consecutive medal to start the season as he also had top 10 finishes at Wellsville and Prairie View.

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: Weston Guetterman

Week 2: Lola Edwards

Week 3: Logan Faulkner

Week 4: Rinny McMullen



Lady Cats win at Prairie View; Wildcats medal 12

overall



Louisburg junior Reese Johnson distances herself from the field Thursday during the Ramsey Invitational at Prairie View High School. Johnson finished second overall and the Lady Cats took first in the team standings.

LA CYGNE – It was just another week for the Louisburg girls cross country team as the Lady Cat runners found themselves atop the team standings again.

For the second consecutive week, the Lady Cats won the team title – this time at the Ramsey Invitational – Thursday at Prairie View High School. Louisburg won going away with 19 points and finished 35 points ahead of runner-up Anderson County.

Also, it was the second time in as many weeks that freshman Lola Edwards and junior Reese Johnson were the first ones to cross the finish line. Edwards won the meet in 20 minutes and 30 seconds, while Johnson was second in 21:11.

“The girls are running well,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “They are slowly drawing closer together with their times, which makes them even better as a team.

“Lola and Reese are doing awesome. They are ready to compete each race and are relentless on the course.”

The Louisburg boys also finished strong as the Wildcats nearly won their second consecutive meet as they finished second with 42 points, just three points behind champion Fort Scott and

one point in front of third place finisher, Anderson County.

“They performed very well,” Reese said. “The top six are running within 30 seconds of each other, which is impressive. As their times drop they will be a strong team at the league and regional meets.”

In all, the Wildcats medaled 12 runners between the two teams, including the entire seven-member girls squad.



Freshman Maddy Rhamy leads a pack of runners Thursday during the Ramsey Invitational.

Along with Edwards and Johnson, sophomore Claire Brown

finished fifth in the girls race in 22:45. Freshmen Maddy Rhamy (23:01) and Erin Apple (23:12) took eighth and ninth, respectively.

Sophomore Bree Gassman was 13th in 23:34 and fellow sophomore Nova Ptacek rounded out the team in 23:55, which was good for 15th.

On the boys side, senior Carson Houchen led the Wildcats in seventh overall in 18:47 and another senior, Cade Holtzen, was 10th in 18:55.



Senior Cade Holtzen races to the finish line Thursday during the Ramsey Invitational. He finished 10th overall.

Juniors Ryan Rogers finished 12th in 19:02, while fellow juniors Caden Bradshaw (19:12) and Hayden Ross (19:13) were

14th and 15, respectively, and also garnered medals.

Freshman Noah Cotter just missed out on a medal as he took 16th in 19:14 and sophomore Leo Martin was 24th in 20:18.

“Earning medals is not what we look at, but it is nice to be rewarded for a strong effort,” Reece said. “With numbers comes quality and these are the best kids in the school which makes my job easy. They work hard and are rewarded for their hard work.”

Louisburg was originally scheduled to compete in the Pittsburg Invitational on Thursday, but due to COVID-19, the Wildcats had to find a different meet. Instead, Louisburg will travel to the Perry-Lecompton Invitational on Thursday at Perry Lake. Races are set to being at 4 p.m.

Wildcat boys, girls finish first at Wellsville Invite



The Louisburg boys and girls cross country teams both earned team titles last Thursday at the Wellsville Invitational. Members of the team are (front row, from left) Braden Branine, Caden Bradshaw, Hayden Ross, Sawyer Richardson, Carson Houchen, Cade Holtzen, Noah Cotter; (back row) Nova Ptacek, Lola Edwards, Reese Johnson, Claire Brown, Bree Gassman, Erin

Apple and Maddie Rhamy.

WELLSVILLE – Less than a week after performing well on one of the toughest courses in the state, the Louisburg cross country teams continued their momentum Thursday at the Wellsville Invitational.

Both Wildcat teams brought home top honors as they both finished first in the team standings and garnered 12 individual medals. It was a memorable day all-around for the Louisburg runners.

“Any time a team is successful it is a good feeling,” Louisburg coach John Reece said. “When both win the meet, and with the margin of the boys win being so small, it makes you feel great. It shows the effort that the runners are giving both individually, and as a team, to support each other’s effort.”

The Louisburg boys found themselves in a battle for the top spot with West Franklin. The Wildcats recorded 46 points and edged West Franklin by just one point without one of their top runners in the lineup.

Junior Ryan Rogers was unable to run last Thursday, but his Wildcats teammates picked up the slack as seniors Carson Houchen and Cade Holtzen earned top 10 finishes. Houchen took fifth overall in 18 minutes and 49 seconds and Holtzen was ninth in 19:08.

Junior Caden Bradshaw also earned a medal for the Wildcats as he took 13th in 19:46. Two more runners, junior Hayden Ross (20:00) and freshman Noah Cotter (20:02), also medaled as they took 15th and 16th, respectively.



Junior Hayden Ross (left) and freshman Noah Cotter sprint to the finish Thursday at Wellsville.

Sawyer Richardson came in 30th in 21:04 and Braden Branine was 34th in 21:39 to round out the Wildcat runners.

“Carson and Cade are great senior leaders,” Reece said. “At the meet they led by example and the others followed. With Ryan not running, we really had to step up with our 3,4 and 5 runners and they did. With every runner counting and as close as the score was, our No. 6 would have won the meet for us if it was a tie breaker.”

The Louisburg girls had a strong performance of their own as the Lady Cats recorded 25 points to win the team title over Santa Fe Trail, which had 43 points.

Freshman Lola Edwards continued her strong season as she won the individual crown going away in 21:02. Junior Reese Johnson was right behind her as she finished second overall in 21:43.

All seven Lady Cat runners came away with individual medals. Sophomore Claire Brown was third on the team in seventh overall in 23:24.

Sophomore Bree Gassman (23:51) and freshman Maddie Rhamy (23:55) took 11th and 12th, respectively. Another freshman, Erin Apple, was 17th in 24:46 and sophomore Nova Ptacek took 22nd in 25:39.



Louisburg coach John Reece urges on freshman Maddie Rhamy on Thursday at Wellsville.

"It was nice to see them (Lola and Reese) running up front, especially with a short week after running at Wamego on the Saturday before," Reece said. "The girls group is doing a great job of pushing each other in meets and working together in practice."

The Wamego course featured several hills and obstacles to overcome, but the Wellsville was vastly different and took a little bit for the Wildcat runners to get used to.

“Wellsville is not a hilly course but it has a million turns on it which makes it hard to get a long stretch to get into a good rhythm,” Reece said.

Louisburg will look to continue its success this Thursday when the Wildcats compete at the Prairie View Invitational. Races are set to begin at 3:30 p.m.

Wildcats medal five at Wamego Invitational



Louisburg senior Carson Houchen leads a pack of runners Saturday during the Wamego Invitational at the Wamego Country Club. Houchen was one of five medalists for the Wildcats.

WAMEGO – For Louisburg cross country coach John Reece, the purpose of driving the 2-plus hours to compete in the Wamego Invitational is a simple one.

The course at Wamego Country Club is where the Class 4A state meet will be held at the end of October and Reece wanted to give his runners a taste of what it is like to run on one of the toughest courses in the state and what it will be like should they make it to state.

The Wamego Invitational brings in some of the top teams and runners from all over the state, and if Saturday’s results

have anything to say, the Wildcats have a chance to do well in the postseason.

Freshman Lola Edwards led the way as she finished sixth overall in 21 minutes and 5 seconds and was one of five Wildcats to medal. The top 40 medalists in each race earn medals.

“Wamego always lines up the top 4A teams in the state each year,” Reece said. “This makes it the most competitive meet next to league for the regular season. Our veteran runners get a chance to run the course again and the newbies get their first taste of one of the toughest courses in the state.”

Edwards led the Lady Cats to a fifth place team finish as they recorded 129 points and were just one spot away from earning team medals – that distinction goes to the top four squads. Baldwin (29 points), Eudora (69), Buhler (80) and Tonganoxie (107) each finished in the top four.

Along with Edwards, junior Reese Johnson also ran well. Johnson, who was a state medalist as a freshman, was familiar with the course after appearing at state the last two years and took 12th in 21:49.

“The race was run in two waves 90 seconds apart, which kind of helped us as we were in the second wave so we got to use the tail end of the first wave to motivate us to pass runners,” Reece said. “Lola and Reese competed very well. As a team we just missed being one of the top four for team medals, but this meet is more about the opportunity to run the course in preparation for a return in October.”

The Wildcat boys came away with three medals of their own. Junior Ryan Rogers led Louisburg in 32nd with a time of 19:08. Senior Carson Houchen also left with a medal as he took 34th in 19:19 and junior Caden Bradshaw was 36th in 19:20.

“The boys team ran great,” Reece said. “The one aspect of their race that was impressive was that the top five runners for us were only 40 seconds apart from each other. This is a huge deal as we move forward. We can not only improve individually, but being so close together we will pull each other along and be strong as a team. Earning three medals on the boys side was outstanding. I hope to be bringing both teams to state this year.”

Senior Cade Holtzen just missed a medal as he finished 45th in 19:38 and freshman Noah Cotter was 48th in 19:48. Freshman Braden Branine was 63rd in 20:38.

On the girls’ side, sophomore Claire Brown also just missed a medal as she took 42nd in 24:14 and sophomore Bree Gassman was 47th in 24:28. Freshman Erin Apple was 50th in 24:41, sophomore Nova Ptacek was 53rd in 25:37 and senior Kennady Wilkerson was 60th in 26:58.

Louisburg is back in action Thursday when it travels to the Wellsville Invitational. The meet is set to begin at 4 p.m.